

Working in Spain as a Dutchman

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Abstract

Globalization is challenging people all over the world to get in touch with different cultures more frequently. When citizens from different countries communicate with each other, misperceptions are easily made, and issues could quickly arise. For this reason, living and working in a different culture could be quite the challenge. This research provides a thorough analysis of the cross-cultural interaction between the Dutch and the Spanish in the working environment. The aim of this study is to explore the Spanish behavioural patterns that are perceived by the Dutch as different from their own culture. Therefore, the following research question was formulated: *“What cultural standards are perceived by Dutch professionals working in Spain?”*. To answer this question, qualitative research was carried out by the means of interviewing Dutch individuals who have been living and working in Spain for at least 6 months. The aim of these interviews was to identify cultural standards of the Spanish culture, from a Dutch perspective. These interviews lasted 70 minutes on average and were analysed using the Thematic Analysis and structured by using the Gioia method. The information retrieved from the interviews was examined and 17 cultural standards were discovered. These cultural standards were examined in more depth and the Spanish underlying values (from a Dutch perspective) were brought to the surface.

Keywords: Spanish culture, Dutch culture, cultural standards, underlying values, Spanish cultural standards, Dutch cultural standards

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1. Introduction

Spain and the Netherlands have great collaboration and strong economic ties when it comes to doing business. There are a lot of products that Spain produces of which the Dutch would like a taste. Spain has exported products with a total worth of 11 billion US dollars to the Netherlands in 2019. The most exported products from Spain to the Netherlands are mineral fuels, vehicles, vegetables, and fruits (Trade economics, 2021). Vice versa, in 2019, the Netherlands exported products with a total worth of 17,51 billion US dollars to Spain. These products include mostly machinery, electronic equipment, and pharmaceutical products (Trade economics, 2021). Furthermore, according to Timmermans (2012), the Netherlands is Spain's seventh biggest trading partner and its second-biggest source of foreign investment. This shows that the Netherlands and Spain are quite dependent on each other when it comes to trading products. To go into more depth and name an example of a Spanish company that has been very successful in the Netherlands, a company called 'Europastry' produces frozen doughs which are used for the production of bread and cakes mainly (Pitchbook, 2021). According to this source, the company was founded in 1987 and has been experiencing rapid growth in the last few years. Europastry currently has 4.500 employees spread over their 18 offices. The firm has 12 offices in Spain, and one in Colombia, Chile, France, the United States, Portugal, and one in the Netherlands (Oldenzaal).

Even though the two countries are trading a lot with each other, doing business with another culture does not always go without friction, which is caused by the cultural differences between countries. Schein (1991) defines culture as "a pattern of shared basic assumptions, which is invented, discovered, or developed by a given group. It is to be taught to new members of the group as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems" (p. 313). Even though the Netherlands and Spain are both part of Europe, a smooth collaboration between the two countries is not guaranteed. Having better knowledge and awareness of these cultural differences from both parties could improve business relations, and therefore, profitability and efficiency.

Literature available nowadays on both cultures is often not derived from recent studies. Most of them are published at least 10 years ago. In this fast-moving world, a lot can change in 10 years. Is Spain (still) the slow-paced country we always thought it was? What is it like to work there (as a Dutchmen)? Are there many differences in culture in the working environment between the two cultures? These questions have been answered throughout this study. The reader could use this information to become aware of the Spanish (working) culture and prepare his- or herself for this.

On the other hand, insight on the Dutch culture is provided to create awareness among the readers regarding their own behavior. This could help identify, and maybe even prevent issues from arising on the work floor between the two cultures.

Cultural differences between Spain and the Netherlands could be understood by using the famous models of Hofstede, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner and Erin Meyer (Hofstede, 2011; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1993; Erin Meyer, 2016). However, the information they offer on the Spanish culture is of quantitative and rather theoretical nature (Hofstede, 2011; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1993). These studies are focused on culture in general. Although these studies provide descriptions of behavior, it does not provide us with clues of why certain people in different cultures behave a certain way (underlying values). Moreover, these studies are also not focused on the business environment. This study provides a more in-depth, and thick description of the Spanish and the Dutch culture in comparison, with a special focus on the business environment.

For example, Fischer, Manstead, and Rodriguez Mosquera (1999) stated that honor-related values are more important for the Spanish than for the Dutch. This is a topic that the Dutch should be aware of. It is rather easy for a bold, Dutch person to criticize a Spanish colleague, whose honor is negatively affected by a comment of such criticizing nature. This might cause cracks in the relationship, and the Dutch might not even be aware of it. The Spanish could start acting differently and the Dutch will think: 'did I do something wrong?' This research provides insights for the Dutch on the aspects and behavior of the working environment in Spain.

Besides the quantitative research, there is also a qualitative study available on the Spanish culture. Meaney (2010) has identified nine Spanish values: '*mañana*', '*family and friends*', '*pride, honor and machismo*', '*beating the system*', '*sense of self-worth*', '*religion*', '*tolerance and prejudice*', '*living in the moment*', and '*manners*'. This research is meaningful when a general view is wanted of Spanish culture. However, this research is not very rigorous. The literature from Meaney (2010) could be used as a base for more extensive, in-depth research. The Spanish values that Meaney (2010) has identified have been compared to the findings from this research. These will be elaborated upon in the conclusion. In contrast to Meaney's research, this study provides a systematic, thorough research on the way the Dutch perceive the Spanish culture, with a focus on the working environment. It is useful for the Dutch to know what the most important values of Spanish culture are. In this way, the Dutchmen working in Spain know if, and how they should adjust their behavior, to have the best possible business relationship with colleagues.

The goal of this paper is to shed light on which Spanish cultural standards Dutch professionals perceive when living and working in Spain. To find out, interviews were carried out with Dutch professionals who are working and living in Spain. To accomplish the goal of this study, the following research question was formulated:

“What cultural standards are perceived by Dutch professionals working in Spain?”

In order to answer this central research question, two sub-questions have been formulated as well:

“What is the cultural logic behind these Spanish cultural standards?”

“How do Dutch professionals working in Spain cope with these Spanish cultural standards?”

In addition, this research provides a recent study from 17 extensive interviews with Dutchmen working in Spain. From these interviews, conclusions were drawn, which were in turn confirmed or rejected by an expert on the Spanish culture. Since there is none to little research done about this aspect at the moment, this study fills this gap in the literature and will help the Dutch in their business life regarding the aspect of dealing and coping with the Spanish culture on the work floor.

This research contributes to the literature in two ways. First of all, the already existing literature is rather quantitative and superficial. The first aim of this study is to go beyond this point and to dive deep into the knowledge regarding the Spanish working culture that the interviewees have provided. Furthermore, by addressing the current research question, this study offers a qualitative investigation of the aspects of the Spain culture which cannot be given by quantitative research. This research contributes to the literature by adding a systematic and rigorous approach to retrieving information on the Spanish working culture from a Dutch perspective. To conclude, this research also considers some existing and relevant literature regarding the topic of Spanish and Dutch culture. This literature is thoroughly examined. Some relevant literature will be elaborated upon in more depth and compared with the findings of this research.

1.1 Outline of the study

The remaining chapters of this study are organized as follows. The second chapter will contain information about the theoretical background where culture and cultural standards will be defined. Moreover, in the third and fourth paragraphs of this chapter, a distinction will be made between the Spanish and the Dutch cultural standards retrieved from the interviews carried out. The third chapter describes the methodology. In this chapter, the research design, the data collection method, the data analysis, and the feedback from the focus group will be highlighted. Chapter four will describe the findings of the research, with a focus on the cultural standards and the underlying values of the Spanish. To conclude, in chapter five the findings will be discussed, and a conclusion will be drawn. In this chapter, the limitations and further research will also be touched upon.

2. Theoretical Background

In this chapter, an overview of all the topics of the research will be displayed. First, the terms 'culture', 'cultural standards', and '(cultural) values' will be defined in more detail. Then, the existing literature from Hofstede will be described more in-depth regarding the differences between the Dutch and the Spanish culture. The literature from Hofstede is chosen to clarify the differences between the Spanish and Dutch cultures. Hofstede is an often-cited scholar on intercultural comparison in general. Furthermore, other researchers who focus on writing about culture would provide similar, etic results, that is the reason only one researcher is chosen for this paragraph. Third, some emic research will be discussed and the Spanish cultural standards defined by Meaney (2010) will be described. Followed by the values of the Dutch culture. To compare the two cultures, Spanish cultural values from Meaney (2010) and Dutch values from Enklaar (2007) will be used. This is done because the Spanish cultural standards from Meaney (2010), as well as the Dutch values from Enklaar (2007), seemed highly appropriate for this study with a high potential of compatibility, and clearly show the differences between the cultures.

2.1. Defining culture, cultural standards, and cultural values

There are already a lot of studies dedicated to culture. All these authors have their way of describing the meaning of 'culture'. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner define culture as a group of people that constitute a connected system of meanings. In addition, Hofstede (1980) describes culture as "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others" (p. 21). Thomas (2010) defines culture as an orientation system, which is different for every country, society, organization, or group. "This system of orientation consists of specific symbols such as language, body language, mimicry, clothing and greeting rituals and is passed on to future generations" (Thomas, 2010, p. 19). The members of such an orientation system have the sense that they belong to a certain group. Within these orientation systems, there are behavioral standards. These could be defined as cultural standards.

To go into more detail on this topic, Fink, Kölling, and Neyer (2005) define cultural standards as follows; "cultural norms that strongly influence the action of an expatriate and reaction of a counterpart, or vice versa" (p. 10). These cultural standards are based upon values, traditions, and rules of behaviour in a given culture. Thomas (1993) provided the following definition for cultural standards; "as cultural standards we understand all kinds of perceiving, thinking, judging, and acting that in a given culture by the vast majority of individuals are considered for themselves and others as normal, self-evident, typical and obligatory. Cultural standards regulate behaviour and guide

individuals to assess observed behaviour” (p. 381). In other words, cultural standards are the typical behavior of people from the same culture. After all interviews were conducted, overlapping topics were discovered. These topics were examined and in the end, categorized into seventeen Spanish cultural standards. These standards are typical of the way how the Spanish behave. This typical behavior was used to draw conclusions for this research.

Another aspect we have to deal with is values. Kluckhohn (1951) defined values as: “A conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means and ends of action” (p. 395). According to Williams (1970), “cultural values represent the implicitly or explicitly shared abstract ideas about what is good, right, and desirable in a society. These cultural values are the bases for the specific norms that tell people what is appropriate in various situations” (p. 375). Examples of cultural values are freedom, prosperity, and security. Values do not explain behaviour. Responses are chosen and guided by these values. Whereas cultural standards do explain certain behavior.

2.2 Etic approach to culture

Now that all important topics are defined, some literature can be introduced. Among many other authors, Hofstede’s literature is chosen to display an etic approach to culture because Hofstede is an often-cited author who specializes in cross-cultural comparisons. This literature provides a general view of Spanish culture compared to the Dutch. In this way, it will become clear how much the Spanish and the Dutch culture differ from each other. For this reason, Hofstede’s dimensions will be thoroughly examined. According to Hofstede (1980), cultures can be categorized into six dimensions. These dimensions are *power distance*, *uncertainty avoidance*, *individualism versus collectivism*, *masculinity versus femininity*, *long-term orientation versus short-term orientation*, and *indulgence versus restraint*. The differences between countries can be compared by a score. The score goes from 0 to 100. According to Hofstede’s insights (n.d.), there are some sharp differences between the Dutch and the Spanish culture. In figure 1, the differences are displayed. In this image, blue represents the Netherlands and purple represents Spain.

The first dimension Hofstede (2011) describes is *power distance*, which is related to the “different solutions to the basic problem of human inequality” (p. 8). The Netherlands has a score of 38 on masculinity, which means that the Netherlands has a *low power distance* culture. Spain has a score of 57, which is, therefore, more leaning towards a large *power distance culture*. This means that

in Spain, hierarchy is normal, parents teach children obedience and corruption happens rather frequently. Whereas in the Netherlands, hierarchy means inequality of roles, corruption is rare, and parents treat children as equals.

The second dimension is *uncertainty avoidance*. The Netherlands has a score of 53, while the Spaniards score 86 on this dimension. One could say that Spain is a *strong uncertainty avoidance* culture, which is defined as “the uncertainty inherent in life is felt like a continuous threat that must be fought” (Hofstede, 2011, p. 10). In these kinds of cultures, staying in jobs even if disliked is normal and everything different is automatically classified as dangerous. Compared to Spain, the Netherlands is more of a *weak uncertainty avoidance culture*. This could be described as “the uncertainty inherent in life is accepted and each day is taken as it comes” (Hofstede, 2011, p. 10). In *weak uncertainty avoidance cultures*, changing jobs is not a problem, and everything different is classified as curious.

The third cultural dimension identified by Hofstede is *individualism versus collectivism*. On this aspect, the Netherlands has a score of 80, which is very high. This means that the Dutch are very focused on themselves rather than on a group. According to Hofstede (2011), individualism can be defined as “everyone is supposed to take care of him- or herself and his or her immediate family only” (p. 11). On the same aspect, Spain has a score of 51. This is right in the middle, but compared to the Netherlands, more on the collectivist side. Hofstede (2011) describes collectivism as “people are born into extended families or clans which protect them in exchange for loyalty” (p. 11). In collectivist cultures, harmony must always be maintained. Whereas in individualistic cultures, speaking one’s mind is considered healthy.

The fourth cultural dimension is *femininity versus masculinity*. On this dimension, the Netherlands has a score of 14 and Spain scores 42 on masculinity. This means that the Netherlands is a very feminine country, whereas Spain is also a feminine culture, but less extreme. A feminine culture is described as “minimum emotional and social role differentiation between the genders” (Hofstede, 2011, p.12). In a feminine culture, it is important to keep a healthy work-life balance. Whereas Hofstede (2011) describes masculinity as the exact opposite, namely “maximum emotional and social role differentiation between the genders” (p. 12). According to these scores, it would be more normal in Spain for a woman to not have a job. Moreover, there will also be a smaller number of women who have a relatively more significant role in a firm.

The fifth cultural dimension is *long-term versus short-term orientation*. The Netherlands is rather long-term focused while Spain is more short-term focused. Aspects of *short-term* oriented countries are; “personal steadiness and stability: a good person is always the same, oneself is supposed to be proud of one’s country and students attribute success and failure to luck” (Hofstede, 2011, p. 15). On the other hand, in *long-term* oriented countries, people think more like “a good person adapts to the circumstances, you should be trying to learn from other countries and students attribute success and failure to the amount of effort put in” (Hofstede, 2011, p. 15).

Lastly, the sixth cultural dimension is *indulgence versus restraint*. This aspect is related to the gratification versus control of basic human desires related to enjoying life. The Netherlands score 68 on this dimension, while Spain has a score of 44. When comparing the two countries, one could say that the Netherlands has a more *indulgent* culture, while Spain has a more *restrained* culture. Aspects of an *indulgence* culture are; a higher percentage of people declaring themselves very happy, freedom of speech is seen as important and they have a perception of personal life control. On the other hand, more *restrained* cultures have; fewer very happy people and a perception of helplessness: what happens to me is not my doing, and freedom of speech is not a primary concern.

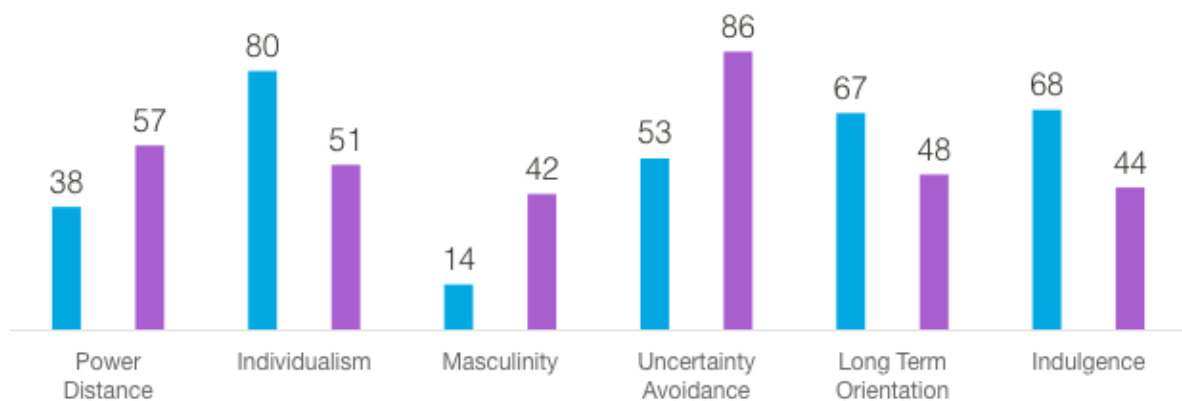


Figure 1: The six dimensions of Hofstede on the Netherlands (blue) and Spain (purple)

As it is clear, there is some literature regarding the basic explanation of the comparison between Spain and the Netherlands available. This gives a first impression of the differences between the two cultures. However, only applying quantitative research is not sufficient in order to understand the underlying values of Spanish culture. In-depth information is not provided in Hofstede’s research, which is a huge limitation. In contrast to this thin approach, a more thick approach is needed, which can be provided by more qualitative research, which is completed in this study.

2.3 Emic approach to culture

The goal of this research is to compare the Dutch and Spanish cultures with a focus on the business perspective. When looking for literature on this topic, articles, and books regarding both cultures were either about history, language, or produce. None of this literature was pointing out the topic for this research; the cultural differences between the Dutch and the Spanish on the work floor. Therefore, general aspects of both cultures seemed to be the best way to get a sense of the cultural differences between the two countries. In order to provide a more qualitative perspective on the Spanish culture, Meaney (2010) provides us with more qualitative and emic research. Nine Spanish cultural values were identified by Meaney (2010), namely; '*mañana*', '*family and friends*', '*pride, honor, and machismo*', '*beating the system*', '*sense of self-worth*', '*religion*', '*tolerance and prejudice*', '*living in the moment*', and '*manners*'. The five most relevant cultural standards for this study will be discussed in more depth below.

'Mañana' means tomorrow and morning. When going to government officials to get something done, you will probably be told to 'come back tomorrow'. Also, do not be surprised if you come back the next day and they tell you again to come back tomorrow. If you want to get something done, do not forget to exaggerate and create a bit of drama, this often helps the Spaniards to see that you really need what you are asking for (quickly). The Spanish do not like to say 'no' if they think a task is not going to be completed in the desired time frame, that is why they will avoid this by saying 'come back tomorrow'.

Family and friends are very important to the Spanish. Families often live very close to each other, and it barely happens that someone leaves the village. The elderly are treated with great respect, they will never be sent to elderly homes when they cannot take care of themselves anymore. Children are also a big part of the life of the Spaniards, they get a lot of attention, from the whole family. Parents like it when their children remain close to home when they graduate. Often, girls will stay with their parents until she is married. Furthermore, Spaniards have a lot of acquaintances, but not a lot of very good friends. Often relationships remain superficial. However, if you manage to become a good friend, then the Spanish will treat you like you are family.

Pride, honor, and machismo is another aspect that Meaney (2010) identified. The Spanish are in general, very proud of their country. If you do not agree, keep this to yourself. Spaniards will take your criticism very personally, which can break your relationship with this person. Furthermore, *machismo* refers to masculine ability. This refers to the behavior of men, especially towards women. The man is the king of the house and earns all the money, and the women are just there to take care of the children and the household. However, this strict separation between men and women is changing now.

Beating the system is what the Spanish refer to as '*picaresca*'. "In the seventeenth century, a novel was published with a villain as the main character 'picaresk'. His job was to beat the system. The Spanish really recognized themselves in this story and believe that the gap between rich and poor is kept in place because of the ones who run the country" (Meaney, 2010, p. 57). 'Picaresca' in a practical sense would be that stealing from the rich is okay.

Living in the moment is the fifth cultural standard that Meaney (2010) refers to. "Spaniards are open and confident people who want to enjoy every moment of the day" (p. 62). They love eating and partying and as long as you are having fun, you are not leaving. Who cares about tomorrow? This lifestyle comes along with lots of noise disturbance. About 44% of the streets in Madrid are labelled harmful to health according to the World Health Organization (Meaney, 2010).

To conclude, the research provided by Meaney (2010) is very helpful to get a general idea of the Spanish culture. It provides information regarding the cultural logic of the Spanish, but is not focused on typical behaviour. The research done by Meaney (2010) was also not focused on comparing it to the Dutch culture, and given the scarcity of qualitative research on this topic, this study provides new insight on this subject. This study also provides a more rigorous and systematic research with anecdotal evidence. This research compares the Dutch and the Spanish culture and provides another aspect of cultural values, namely the business side.

2.4 Dutch cultural values

Up to now, it was mentioned that Spanish life is about seizing the day, and family and friends are a number one priority. Moreover, beating the system, pride, and not feeling a sense of pressure when it comes to the completion of a task in a timely manner are part of the Spanish culture. In order to correctly compare the Spanish culture to the Dutch culture, and vice versa, the Dutch culture also needs to be elaborated on in more depth. According to Enklaar (2007), the Dutch culture consists of twelve values. These values are; *salvation, guilt, charity, truth, labor, order and tidiness, utility, reliability, moderation, agreement, equality, and self-determination*. The nine most interesting ones for this study would be *guilt, truth, labor, utility, reliability, moderation, equality, and self-determination*.

Guilt concerns the Dutch value of feeling responsible for your actions. One should take responsibility for mistakes and admit that these mistakes were made. On the work floor, this value is also applicable. Dutch employees feel responsible for their job and the corresponding tasks. If there has been a misjudgment, one will admit this and try to find a fitting solution. The Dutch will appreciate it when someone admits their mistake. 'Everyone makes mistakes, it is okay. We can all learn from each other's mistakes', is what one could get as a response to admitting a mistake.

Truth is another value that the Dutch live by. It is important to speak the truth. If you keep a secret or tell lie, you can get caught, and that is very bad. Honesty is more important than politeness. The Dutch are therefore considered quite blunt by other cultures. Saying what you think is not always appreciated. However, "we do not want nice stories, we want to know the truth" (Enklaar, 2007).

Labor as a Dutch value would be described as 'working is good'. It is good if you have a job and it is good to be busy. If you ask a Dutch person how they are doing, the response will often be; 'good, busy'. This would be perceived as a good thing. Working is good and being busy is even better. It means that this person has a purpose, he or she is working for a company and they are doing everything they can to be good at their job. Because doing nothing is not considered relaxing, it is considered being lazy.

Utility as a Dutch value means that everything we do needs to have a purpose. Everything has to go as efficiently as possible, otherwise it is a waste of time. We need to appreciate what we have and be economical with our belongings, especially money. Wasting food, money, and time is a shame and it should not be done.

Reliability concerns the Dutch value of keeping promises. This could be a promise of any sort. Appointments with people are also promises. Showing up on time could be perceived as keeping a promise. It could be as simple as scheduling a meeting at 9:00 and being on time. If you are late, it is considered not keeping a promise, and not this person will automatically be labelled as 'unreliable'.

Moderation is another Dutch value that is interesting in this study. In the Netherlands, it is an unwritten rule that you keep your emotions to yourself. You need to be able to control your emotions and be patient, especially on the work floor. If you are mad about something, you first calm yourself down before you confront someone. You then go into discussion with someone in a calm, patient, and non-emotional way. Yelling or cursing on the work floor is considered aggressive and is not normal behavior, and therefore, not really tolerated.

Equality in the Dutch sense means that you should not think you are better than someone else, even if you have a higher status, you should still be humble.

Self-determination is another value that is important to the Dutch. It concerns the feeling that everyone should do what they want, as long as they do not bother me. Independence is really important. You need to make your own choices and be able to state your own opinion. Nobody can tell you what to do.

The studies from Enklaar (2007) and Meaney (2010) provided interesting insights into both the Dutch and the Spanish cultures. Since clear differences could be spotted between these two cultures, this research could be very helpful for Dutchmen living and working in Spain. It is important to be aware of your own culture, as well as the culture of the country you are moving to. As soon as these differences are clearly defined, adapting to a new culture will be easier. However, Meaney's study is only focused on one culture at a time. And Hofstede's study is of quantitative nature. In order to draw conclusions about both cultures in comparison, etc cross-cultural research is needed. This study provides this by gathering anecdotal evidence from Dutchmen working in Spain.

3. Methodology

This chapter introduces the research design. The data collection, data analysis, and feedback from the focus group will be discussed as well.

3.1 Research Design

In line with the theoretical background and the research question of this study, this research adopts a qualitative research approach to retrieve the appropriate information to draw solid conclusions for this study. This was done through interviews. Qualitative research has been chosen for this topic since quantitative research would not provide a sufficient number of specific situations where interviewees were able to tell their stories and explain situations that happened to them on the Spanish work floor. Qualitative research provides a high potential to uncover new insights on a phenomenon, or in this case, a cultural standard of a country (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2012). Moreover, because we were interested in capturing a “what” question, an in-depth and thick description of values and beliefs will be more likely to present itself when using a qualitative research strategy (Gioia, et al., 2012).

Step 1: Data collection method

Data for this study was collected through semi-structured interviews with Dutchmen living and working in Spain. Table 1 represents the demographics of these interviewees. These interviewees were selected by using several criteria. The Dutchmen needed to be working with Spaniards, both of their parents must be Dutch, and they had to be living and working in Spain for at least six months. This last criterion was chosen because six months seemed to be the right amount of time to have settled and gotten used to a new culture. It was important for this study that the interviewees knew enough about the Spanish culture and were able to compare it with the Dutch culture, and therefore six months seemed like a reasonable minimum. Dutchmen needed to be working with Spaniards as well, otherwise, their opinion would not be relevant for this study. Lastly, both parents must be Dutch. If one of the parents of the interviewees would be from another culture, the interviewee would probably have taken some of the other culture’s behavior and underlying values. This would also be less relevant for this study.

| Interviewee number | Gender | Age | Duration of time working in Spain | Location of work in Spain | Occupation/ industry |
|--------------------|--------|-----|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| 1 | Woman | 35 | 5,5 years | Madrid | Digital transformation |
| 2 | Man | 31 | 1,5 years | Barcelona | Solution Architect for Software |
| 3 | Man | 54 | 2 years | Valencia | Production Manager |
| 4 | Woman | 48 | 3 years | San Miguel de Salinas | Operational Buyer |
| 5 | Man | 46 | 7 years | Madrid | Global Trade Compliance Leader |
| 6 | Woman | 31 | 10,5 years | Aduela Costa | Property Manager and Bartender |
| 7 | Man | 36 | 8 months | Madrid | Customer Service Agent |
| 8 | Man | 29 | 5 years | Madrid | Data Analyst |
| 9 | Woman | 28 | 7 years | Lanzarote | Receptionist hotel |
| 10 | Man | 52 | 13 years | Alicante | Financial Director |
| 11 | Women | 54 | 1 year | Tenerife | Café Owner |
| 12 | Women | 60 | 25 years | Alicante | Owner of Elderly Centre |
| 13 | Man | 45 | 11 years | Barcelona | Co-owner of software provider |
| 14 | Man | 52 | 14 years | Malaga | Expansion Manager |
| 15 | Woman | 46 | 5 years | Valencia | Founder and coach of employee well- being company |
| 16 | Woman | 60 | 3,5 years | Altea | Freelance Real Estate Agent |
| 17 | Woman | 60 | 30 years | La Nucia | Director of a Bank |

Table 1: Demographics of the interviewees

In addition, to be able to get in touch with people that fit these criteria, a message was posted on several Facebook groups; *'Nederlandstaligen die wonen in Spanje'* (Dutch speakers who are living in Spain), *'Nederlanders en Belgen in Spanje'* (Dutchman and Belgians in Spain), *'Nederlandstaligen in Spanje'* (Dutch speakers in Spain) and *'Expats in Sevilla'*. The total amount of members of these four groups combined is approximately 66.000. However, we need to take into account that not all of these 66.000 members have seen the message and that some members could be in multiple groups. When the messages were posted, 30 people responded to say that they were interested. Then, when chatting with them, some respondents were not considered appropriate for different reasons and some stopped responding.

In total, 19 interviews were conducted, of which two were declared invalid because these interviewees were living in Spain, but working in a Dutch company with only Dutch colleagues and a Dutch boss. To be able to retrieve a good picture of how things work on the Spanish work floor, the goal was to get 15-20 interviews done. Less than 15 would not give a good, valid response to be able to draw solid conclusions. More than 20 interviews would take up too much time because all the interviews were between 1 and 1,5 hours long. Since the time to transcribe 1 minute of video was approximately 3 to 4 minutes, more than 20 interviews would have taken up too much time.

Research instrument

For this research, the data collection method is based upon the approach by Thomas (2010). This approach suggests identifying and categorizing cultural standards found through the interviews conducted. The cultural standards will be identified using the Critical Incident Technique. Fiedler, Mitchell, and Triandis (1971), define the Critical Incident Technique as a system that collects direct observations of the behavior of people so that practical problems could be solved, and psychological principles could be developed. Furthermore, according to Thomas (2010), the goal of the Critical Incident Technique is to “identify those cultural differences and special characteristics that came into play during an intercultural encounter” (p. 25). When analyzing situations where Spanish and Dutch are clashing, recurring patterns of behavior can be discovered, which could be referred to as cultural standards. This would mean that Dutchmen in Spain have more or less similar experiences with the Spanish professionals on the work floor. These experiences could be about surprising or difficult situations.

For this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted. According to Gioia, et al. (2012), “semi-structured interviews obtain both retrospective and real-time accounts by those people experiencing the phenomenon of theoretical interest” (p. 19). Compared to structured interviews, semi-structured interviews leave room for anticipating the answer of the interviewee, which is very valuable in this study. On the other hand, non-structured interviews would not provide enough structure. For this study, the structure was needed in order to compare the answers of the interviewees. Among questioning, the Critical Incident Technique was adopted. The interviewees were asked to recall moments in which something ‘weird’ happened, either in a positive or negative way. These situations were compared across all interviews, to see if there were overlapping topics. Situations in which the two cultures were clashing, were investigated thoroughly.

Furthermore, the sampling technique used for this study is purposive sampling. This sampling technique is popular among small samples (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2009). According to Saunders, et al. (2009) “purposive sampling enables you to use your judgement to select cases that will best enable you to answer your research question(s) and to meet your objectives” (p. 237). As soon as the samples were determined, the interviews were carried out in Dutch. Since all the interviewees were Dutch, it seemed logical to have the interviews in Dutch as well. In this way, the interviewees felt comfortable and capable to express their stories and feelings in the best way possible. As soon as the interviews were conducted, a transcription was made using ‘amberscript.com’. This transcription was checked on errors and then, everything was translated word for word into the English language (verbatim).

Step 2: Data analysis

Thematic analysis is chosen to analyze the data of this research. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), a thematic analysis could be defined as a “method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (p. 79). Six steps should be followed to carry out the analysis in a proper way. These steps are displayed in figure 2. This analysis was carried out combined with another method, the Gioia method. This method consists of three stages, ‘first-order concepts’, ‘second-order themes’, and ‘aggregate dimensions’ (Gioia et al., 2012). For this study, ‘aggregate dimensions’ will be referred to as ‘underlying values’ to fit better with the findings of this research. The second step of thematic analysis, ‘generating initial codes’, could be compared to the ‘first-order concepts’ from the Gioia method. Then, the third step from the thematic analysis is similar to the ‘second-order themes’ in Gioia et al. (2012). Lastly, the ‘aggregate dimensions’ of the method from Gioia et al. (2012), could be compared to the fifth step of the thematic analysis, namely ‘defining and naming the themes’.

| Phase | Description of the process |
|---|--|
| 1. Familiarizing yourself with your data: | Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas. |
| 2. Generating initial codes: | Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code. |
| 3. Searching for themes: | Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme. |
| 4. Reviewing themes: | Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis. |
| 5. Defining and naming themes: | Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme. |
| 6. Producing the report: | The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis. |

Figure 2: The six steps of thematic analysis

After the seventeen interviews were carried out, the interviews were read, and important sections were highlighted. Every interview gave either new insights into the Spanish culture or more confirmation regarding the importance of cultural standards. These important, or rather interesting sections were compared to all other interviews to see if certain topics were overlapping across different interviews. The interesting sections were inserted into an Excel sheet and labeled. Then, the passages with all these topics were compared and similar incidents got the same label. Therefore, some topics were combined. The remaining topics were identified as seventeen Spanish cultural standards. These cultural standards were then related to Spanish values, explaining the logic behind the cultural standards.

Step 3: Feedback from an expert in the field

The cultural standards and values retrieved from the interviews were presented to a Spanish expert. This person was born in Spain but works in the Netherlands now, so the expert is very aware of both cultures, which is very valuable for this research. The expert could refute previously made assumptions and interpretations. On the other hand, the expert could also confirm the interpretations previously made, which enriches the meaning of the findings. The application of the expert can contribute to understanding why and how previous findings were established and analyzed (Nyumba, et al., 2018). For this research, the 'expert' does not need to have certain expertise on culture, he or she just needs to be part of, in this case, the Spanish cultural community. This person needs to speak the language and has the ability to interpret kinds of behavior that people from other cultures cannot.

4. Findings

In this part, the findings of the research are shown. The cultural standards will be defined, and the underlying values will be displayed and further explained.

4.1 Cultural standards

After a careful analysis of the interviews, critical incidents were examined and categorized. Critical incidents concerning similar topics were not taken into account unless at least three interviewees mentioned them. The categories became the Spanish cultural standards. Seventeen Spanish cultural standards were identified through the interviews with the Dutch living and working in Spain. In Table 2 below, these cultural standards are displayed and summarized.

| Cultural standards | Cultural standard (objective) | Cultural standard (Dutch perspective) | Number of interviewees that mentioned cultural standard |
|---------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Respect for authority and power | Respect for authority is acknowledged and valued | You cannot go into discussion with your boss, your opinion cannot be expressed | 13 |
| Instructions | The boss gives instructions and those are exactly followed | The boss decides what needs to happen and you carry it out, there is no freedom in how or when | 13 |
| Family-focused | Life is about enjoying with family and friends | Work is less important than family. They do not feel accomplished with only working | 13 |
| Honour/pride | You make sure that you do not damage someone else's honour | Critique is a personal attack. Acknowledging mistakes and apologizing is not done, stubborn | 13 |
| Bureaucracy | Governmental officers strictly follow bureaucratic procedures | Governmental officers are formal, slow and not helpful | 12 |
| Flexible with time | Meetings, appointments and planning are perceived as flexible | Being late or not showing up at all, never in a rush, you cannot trust that they come on the time agreed upon, incapable of doing something quick | 11 |
| Being closed off | Being closed off to people who are not friends or family | Personal relationships are hard to build, trust needs to be earned first | 9 |
| Not focused on service | Providing service to clients or responding to requests has no priority | Not focused on service | 9 |
| Network | Network is very important to get things done | Not focused on service, if you have a good relationship, they will help you | 9 |
| Conservativeness | Value the way of working that has been done for a long time | Very dependent on traditions, habits and are not innovative and progressive thinkers | 8 |
| Control | The boss has to check the work of his/her subordinates | Do not feel responsible for their work, minimum effort is enough | 8 |
| Emotions/high spirits | High spirits are part of daily life | Agression, cursing and high spirits are overdone and unnecessary and can scare others | 7 |

| | | | |
|------------------------|--|--|---|
| Loyal to the job | People stay a long time at the same firm at the same function, without promotion or change | Not focused on career, not ambitious | 6 |
| Flexible with rules | Only obey the rules when it suits them | The rules are being obeyed if they are controlled, if not, they will ignore the rules | 6 |
| Hospitality | Great hospitality | Nice that the host/hostess takes you serious, if you are a guest you will be spoiled | 5 |
| Making money | Working because you have to, to make money for your family | Not focused on career, do not value recognition or performance | 5 |
| Personal relationships | For friends you do everything | Warm personal relations, the moment they are your friends, they see you as family, they will do anything for you | 5 |

Table 2: Cultural standards

4.1.1 In general

Five Spanish cultural standards were discovered from the interviews which fit in the category ‘in general’. The cultural standards belonging to this category are; *flexible with time*, *flexible with rules*, *honour*, *not focused on service*, and *high spirits*. These Spanish cultural standards will be elaborated upon in further depth in the coming paragraphs.

Flexible with time

The Spanish have a flexible perception of time. This concerns the perception of time at work, but also in their personal life. In practice, this means that the Spanish do not value matters such as being on time for meetings. It is also very normal to just not show up at all, without giving any notice or any apology, if more important opportunities arise. The Spaniards use the expression ‘cortesia’ to explain why they are late, giving politeness as a reason¹. However, ‘cortesia’ is not appropriate when work-related meetings are being held. You would also never apologize for being late for the simple reason that nobody cares. The Spanish perceive time just like how they perceive rules. The rules are there to give guidelines rather than for them to be strict lines that you cannot cross. Time is just an indication, it is not fixed. In general, the Spanish do not really like (long-term) planning. Spontaneous and last-minute appointments are what they are more comfortable with. If a meeting in a Spanish firm is supposed to start at 10:00, the employee will get a coffee at 10:00, go to the bathroom and talk with his or her colleagues for 10 minutes first. Moreover, in Spain working hours are fluid. The Spanish employee usually works from 10:00 to 20:00, with a two-hour lunch break around 14:00. Working overtime or during the holidays is normal for the Spanish. The Spanish work a lot, but not always very efficiently.

¹ Mentioned by the expert

“It happened to me so many times that I was waiting with clients in front of a house, and then the other real estate agent did not show up or came an hour late. And then he did not even apologize whatsoever. He says: “Yes, there was a lot of traffic”. And then I think: “Well, then you should have left home earlier...””.

“If rules are too square, they will make the rules rounder themselves. You cannot even imagine. If they have a coffee break they will get a coffee and a little sandwich, and that is supposed to take 10 minutes, but they will always make it 15. Time is something that is really stretched here. If you have a meeting, you always have ‘cortesia’. Then everybody will be just on time, but then they have to go to the toilet, etc. However, this is getting better. It was much worse 20 years ago. And I also do not mind if a Spaniard takes 10 minutes longer. While the Dutch will think of these ten minutes like they have better things to do, and I have some other appointment planned after this”.

According to the Dutch interviewees, this aspect concerns situations where the Spanish do not show up at meetings or show up late and are not very quick with processing requests from colleagues. This frustrates the Dutch because they are used to being on time themselves, as well as the other party. It is normal to be on time for meetings because you have respect for each other’s time. Some might even say that the Dutch have some kind of obsession with time and efficiency. That obsession is fed by fear, the fear of losing too much time. If you are Dutch and you are going to be late for a meeting, you give a call and apologize on the phone, and then when you get there, you apologize again. This person will feel very ashamed and uncomfortable, since everyone was waiting for you, and is probably frustrated with you at that moment. Dutch will find it unusual that Spanish employees stay at work until 20:00 and that they are having such an extended and rather luxurious lunch, including drinking wine, and going back to work after. The Dutch usually just eat a sandwich with cheese behind their desk or in the cafeteria of the office, that is it, it will also not take longer than half an hour (utility).

Flexible with rules

From the Spanish perspective, rules are rather guidelines than strict lines you cannot overstep. Rules will be followed whenever it is convenient. In Spain, someone needs to keep employees and citizens under control and check if they are following the rules or not. To the Spanish, following the rules feels like repressive control from higher up the hierarchy. In this way, the boss can show his power. The Spanish do not really identify with the rules because of this. As a consequence, if the boss leaves the room, the employees get the feeling that they do not have to work (as hard) anymore because there is no control over them at that moment. They might perceive rules as obligations that their boss or another authority made to keep an eye on them, to control their actions.

If Spanish employees receive a task from their boss, they will be continuously supervised to make sure that the task is being completed. If this is not done, there is a big chance that the task is also not completed, or at least not in the right way, or in the desired timeframe. This 'picaresca' way of behaving is something that is well known in Spanish literature and can be described as being superior to the system, being smart enough to violate, or rather, bending the rules, without anybody noticing. It reflects a troubling relationship between individuals and society (Zeisberg, 2015). Picaresca is not exactly a cultural standard in this research, but it is in line with being flexible with rules. Expression in typical behaviour regarding this aspect was unfortunately not found. However, picaresca is still in line with the cultural logic of bending the rules. Following this mentality, some Spanish think it is not that bad to steal from the rich since they became rich thanks to us, so we can steal a bit from them, they will never notice anyway.

Moreover, rules seem to apply differently to different people. The following situation will explain this. One interviewee was having a drink at a bar and the waiter forgot to put two drinks on the bill. So, she wanted to go back and pay, but her sister said: 'What are you doing? It is their fault, they have enough money'. But the expert decided to pay anyway, to her it was not fair to the waiter. However, if it was in a village where she did not know anyone, she might have acted differently.

"A ban on smoking, a ban on drinking alcohol, and other rules are being complied with, at least, as far as I know. When I enter the bathroom in the production department, I sometimes smell cigarettes, then I know someone has been smoking there. But yeah, I do not know who. They listen, but they also disobey rules, but not when I am looking. What I do notice though, and I find it quite funny, is that sometimes when I enter the factory, I hear a whistle. They do this so that the employees know that I am entering the factory. That is why I sometimes surprise them because we have multiple entries. But they are meeting their production goals, and they are not making a mess, so it is fine. But yeah, sometimes one might smoke a cigarette in the bathroom, but I am not going to put effort into finding out who did it".

"They are flexible when it comes to following the rules. We have passwords for our systems. These are shared with everyone and my problem is that they are not fixing it. Not everyone has an account, but they do have to work with it, so their boss says; to use the account of someone else. They can also just give everyone access, then the problem is solved. And then you get training and they say: 'you can never give your password to someone else, you have to sign a contract that you are not giving your password to others.' And then the next day they just keep sharing their passwords. So, they do not always comply with the rules, it depends on what the rules are. Even if you are driving your car, yes there are rules, but they will drive in the middle of the road and park everywhere. They are just very lazy with the rules. Us Dutchies are just very good citizens, we listen."

From the Dutch perspective, rules are rules and shall not be broken, they give some kind of security and structure. It gives clarity about what is right and what is wrong, which the Dutch really appreciate. The Dutch perceive the Spanish behaviour regarding rules, or rather, not following the rules, as irresponsible. The Dutch might think that they will only follow the rules if it suits them and if they have an advantage by following a specific rule. If there is no advantage for them and they do not fear being punished for it, they are going to ignore the rule. The Dutch are quite annoyed by this; Who do you think you are that you do not have to follow the rules? The Dutch might fear that Spanish behaviour leads to chaos and arbitrariness, undermining trust and order.

Honour

The Spanish were perceived as proud by the Dutch in different aspects. The three aspects of pride that were mentioned most by the Dutch were; being proud of their family, proud of their job, and proud of their country. Also, some interviewees noticed that the Spanish tend to not admit their mistakes. Admitting mistakes means that you did something that you should not have done, which you are aware of. They either blame it on someone else or makeup excuses. Especially managers in Spain avoid admitting mistakes a lot. But also, parents see admitting mistakes as a weakness and will therefore never do it. Moreover, criticism is seen as a personal offense, you just do not do that. The Spanish will do anything to not affect anyone's honour or feelings. They would rather not express their opinion than give feedback or criticize someone than go against their values. For them, it is important to not step on somebody's toes. The Spanish really understand the sensitivity of others, they try to avoid harming them. When trying to criticize someone, one might get a response from the Spanish like; 'I know better because I am older. The teacher could say: 'es asi porque si, porque lo digo yo' (It is like this because I say so).

"They do not admit their mistakes, especially managers. They will never apologize or admit that they did something wrong. The issue I had was about reservations that needed to be paid, which I tried, but I could not get it done. So, I wrote it down on a note and I put it in our system. The next day I got a text from my boss saying: "Why has this not been paid yet?" And I said: it is on the paper and in the system. And she said, "Nope it is not here". Then I came back the next day and I checked, and my note was still there, it was also in the system, so I made pictures just in case. If it were a colleague that made a mistake, they would admit to it way faster and apologize. Managers do not do this. In the Netherlands, they do though".

"We had to deliver a digital product and I had a deadline. I made it clear to my team from the get-go, that a deadline is a deadline. If you think you are not going to meet the deadline, I need to know this a few weeks, or at least a few days before, so that we can shift our strategy. Not one the day before the deadline, then I cannot do anything anymore. So, in the beginning, this would happen a lot. And I even spoke about it with my team

leader. I told him that this is not working and that I cannot fix things last-minute. I needed to manage the stakeholders, but I cannot do so if I do not have the latest information. So, this needed to change. He took my feedback very personally like he did something wrong himself, well yes that was true, but he felt like I was attacking him personally, which I was not. So, if you criticize someone, you explain how this person could do a better job and you give constructive feedback. But then, in Spain, they see it as a personal attack.”

In the Netherlands, it is normal to give someone feedback or criticize them. It is perceived as a positive thing to do, as wanting to make others do better, giving them a hand or a tip can be very helpful for someone. The way the Dutch criticize each other, will not work in Spain. When the interviewees criticized the Spanish, they did not receive a nice response. Comments like: ‘Who do you think you are?’ or just being ignored after you made such a comment were no exceptions. Moreover, if managers in the Netherlands would do not admit their mistakes, the employees will lose respect immediately, there it is expected and more than normal to take responsibility for your actions. If you do not do so, Dutch employees will think that you are a bad leader.

Not focused on service

From the interviews, we can conclude that the Spanish are not very focused on providing good services to their customers, clients, or colleagues. Not providing good service will not necessarily push the Spanish customers away, they are used to this behaviour. Moreover, the Spanish will take their time if a colleague asks them for a favour, if they even accept to do something for them. It often happens that the colleague in question will try to pass on the task to someone else. When someone accepts the task, the Spanish will take their time to finish it. And if they notice that they are not going to be able to finish it (on time), they will not let you know. You will have to find out yourself by checking up on them. Things such as waiting in line are not a problem for the Spanish, they are very patient with these kinds of daily situations. They will take this chance to chat with someone who is also waiting in line and enjoy this time of not having to work.

“I was working with a woman at the health care department and I sometimes got complaints about her. Oftentimes, the British were complaining about her. Her job was to check their blood pressure, but they already start with higher values because she is yelling so much. I even told my contact person that the British are a bit scared of her, ‘maybe you should do something about it?’ You do not feel comfortable if you are treated in that way.”

“When I was calling the customer service of Vodafone because I was having a problem, the person on the phone said: “Who do you think you are that you are calling me?!”. As a Dutch person, you would never do that, we are way more service-focused than the Spanish.”

“I was at the supermarket and I put my groceries on the assembly line. Then, the girl who was supposed to scan my groceries just turns to her colleagues and starts talking to her for five minutes... But I had to go to work, so I was in a rush. But they do not care, they just kept talking. A Spanish person would just wait and say nothing. They would just wait until they are done talking, they would never tell them to stop and hurry up”.

In the Netherlands, providing good customer service is a must. When a company does not take care of this, a lot of customers will go to their competitors. Employees are not necessarily loyal to a company, or for example a telephone provider. You just go to the company that provides the best services for the cheapest price. Moreover, the Dutch are also quite impatient, so waiting in line at the grocery store or being put on hold on the phone is perceived as very annoying. It is a waste of the time they are spending there because that time could be spent more useful somewhere else (utility). As mentioned in striking quote two, the Dutch would not accept behaviour like this from a company like Vodafone. They would just switch providers right then and there. As shown in striking quote three, waiting in line at the supermarket because one of the cashiers is chatting with a colleague will most likely not happen (a lot) in the Netherlands. If this happens, the cashier will receive complaints from some of the customers. Things like: ‘Stop talking and do your job, I do not have all day to wait in line here’ should not be surprising remarks made in such a situation.

High spirits

High spirits can occur as the raising of the voice, cursing, and intense emotions. In Spain, ‘high spirits’ is part of daily life. It is normal to raise your voice to make your point or show that you have power. Moreover, Spanish-speaking countries are also known for their temperamental citizens. This means that the Spanish, but also Latin-American people are known for being very passionate and are not afraid of getting into heated discussions and showing some kind of aggression towards one another. For the Spanish, yelling is part of daily life, they genuinely express their feelings, and cursing is done quite often. Swearing to each other is done on a daily basis and also between friends but has seldom very serious consequences. After a few minutes, the argument is forgotten about and everything is fine. The so-called ‘macho culture’ was also something that was mentioned in two of the interviews. With this is meant that (especially) men can be very arrogant, show their power or even abuse their power, raise their voice and show off (with their expensive cars for example). This ‘macho culture’ has not been mentioned a lot. However, one interviewee who mentioned it said that this is still done by some men, who are most of the time between the ages of 50 and 60.

“In Spain, they have approximately 25 different kinds of coffee. When I was working at the bar, someone asked me for a ‘bonbon’, which turned out to be one of these kinds of coffee. When I asked him if he could explain what it was, he said: ‘you are such a useless person’. So, I explained to him that I come from the Netherlands and that I like living here, and to provide for myself, I got this job. I would really appreciate it if you could explain to me how I can make this coffee for you. He stood next to me, behind the bar, and explained all the 25 kinds of coffee. I wrote every step of every coffee together on a paper with him”.

“I once had a conflict with my manager, who, in the end, was the reason for my burn-out. It was a little man who was always yelling and who had a very negative attitude. Once it was windy, and when he came in, a few leaves also came in. And he asked me: ‘why is it so dirty in here!?’ I was so fed up with this guy. So, then I said: ‘Why are you complaining so much, you can clean it up yourself!’ He did not expect this response from me. In the end, I even had to apologize to him, while he was the one who started yelling in the first place. My other boss was also there, and some guests...”.

In the Netherlands, high spirits are easily interpreted as aggression, which is considered abnormal and unnecessary. It could even lead to the opposite reaction that the Spanish want to accomplish since the Dutch hate aggression. It is perceived by the Dutch as being emotional and losing your temper, which is considered a weakness. When you raise your voice to a Dutch person, this person could think: ‘Why are you yelling at me?’, and maybe even lose respect or close off. They do not see the point in using aggression, a normal tone of voice and argumentation will do. In the Netherlands, nobody really raises their voice just to clarify something or make a point, there are other ways to do this. Saying flatly: ‘I have an important announcement’ or ‘there is a problem’ will get the attention of everyone. If the Dutch are raising their voice, something serious is going on and they might be very angry.

4.1.2 The boss

Three Spanish cultural standards were discovered from the interviews which fit in the category ‘the boss’. The cultural standards belonging to this category are; *respect for authority and power*, *instructions* and *control*. These Spanish cultural standards will be elaborated upon in further depth in the coming paragraphs.

Respect for authority and power

Respect for authorities is typical Spanish behaviour. The police, parents, the state, and the boss at work possess an authority that the Spanish respect. In the Spanish culture, paying respect means that going into discussions with your boss is not appreciated and appropriate. If you give your opinion, you might run the risk of being seen as disrespectful or being the smart ass who knows everything better. In Spain, you want to leave the best impression on the boss by just doing what he says, and not trying to find another, better, or more efficient solution. If the boss tells you to do something, you do it. You are not going to discuss it first, it is your boss, so you must obey. Spanish bosses might say: *'Aquí el que manda soy yo, el proyecto/empresa no es tuyo'* (I am the one in charge here, the company/project is not yours) when a subordinate comes up with an idea or does not agree with the boss. You are also not allowed, or rather, expected to say 'no' when your boss asks you to do something. So if you are given a task that you know you cannot complete, you will say 'yes' and then hope for the best. On the flip side, when authority must be accepted and orders blindly obeyed without discussion, the people will violently protest when the burden becomes too heavy or injustice too great.

"Because of the lockdown, we were only allowed to walk with the dog 50 meters around the house, and you had to go alone. When it was 3 o'clock in the morning, my husband said: "let's go together, there are no police around this time anyway". We did not even walk for a few minutes and then two police cars surrounded us, we could not go anywhere. They did not just tell us that we were not following the rules, they made sure we could not escape. They already had their handcuffs ready because we were together on the street walking the dog. We talked our way out of it eventually, but they made sure that one of us actually went inside. The police officer said: 'Next time, you are coming with us'. You cannot imagine this happening in the Netherlands. There everybody is on the street during the curfew, here you really cannot".

"There was a young guy at work who got a promotion. All of a sudden, he started to act differently towards me. Then I saw that macho culture again. I really do not like it when that happens. If you are having fun with me as colleagues, and as soon as you have a higher position you start acting like you are above me, I cannot handle that".

In the Netherlands, it is normal to go into discussions with your boss about the best way to carry out a strategy or complete a certain task for example. The Dutch may perceive the Spanish behaviour regarding this aspect as being a 'yes-man', or just being too scared to give your opinion. Which is a negative perception of the action of not going into discussion. For the Dutch, it might be difficult to understand that the Spanish employees do not feel responsible for their work (guilt). The Dutch value 'guilt' clashes with the Spanish in this way. The Dutch would find it a shame that you are not allowed to use your expertise to work out a better solution. In the Netherlands, it is normal to

state your opinion, and you brainstorm about better ideas with your colleagues, but also with your boss. The Dutch boss thinks; 'I hired these people because they are smart and good at their job, not to just do what I am telling them to do. I want their opinion; different perspectives will help me make better decisions. I really value the feedback of my subordinates'. Why would you hire such smart people and not use them? Then the boss could also just hire people who do not have any degree if he just asks them to fulfil tasks and not think one or two steps ahead.

Instructions

Spanish employees strictly follow instructions from their boss only. There is no room for creativity or initiative. The boss will give the employees a task, and they are asked to fulfil this task, nothing more and nothing less. '*No te pago por pensar, te pago por hacer*' (I do not pay you to think, I pay you to do). This is what you are taught when you were little, you do not learn that you can be critical towards people who have authority over you, that is not how it works in Spain. Moreover, if you take initiative and responsibility you take the chair of the boss, and that is not appreciated. Also, bosses prefer to hire docile people. If you get a job offer and you do not accept it right away, they will not wait, they go straight to the next candidate. Ten others want that job and are qualified enough, and if you do not accept the full package, someone else will. The Spanish boss decides what is going to be your task, and you just fulfil it. Saying 'no' is not an option. Feedback is not welcome and if there is a problem, you go to your boss, and you will not try to fix it yourself. Every employee is doing the minimum, tasks will be carried out but that is it, there is no point in doing more. If the task is completed and there is no new task yet, Spanish employees will wait to be assigned a new one. They will do whatever works best for them, which is not changing and just continuing what they are doing, keeping it as simple as possible. Working harder or more efficiently is not considered clever. But when the boss orders you to make extra hours, you obey, since you want to make a good impression on your boss.

"The team that I was in, was just me and Spaniards. When we were working on something together, I noticed that they always did the minimum, nothing extra. And if they were stuck at some point, they just remained there and waited for their problem to be fixed in some magical way. I would call around to see if there is someone who could help me or ask my colleagues about it or the company that the issue is concerned. You cannot just wait around for the problem to fix itself".

"If we are having problems with our machine, it needs to be repaired, then the maintenance guy says: 'This will take two hours'. Then I had four men on this machine, and they need to do something else for two or three hours. They would rather sit with each other and eat a sandwich than do something useful. So now I installed another machine that we can use when one needs to be repaired. This is going well now. But when I

was not working here yet, and the machine broke down, they were having a little party because they had to wait to get back to work”.

“Everybody here follows instructions. If you do not give those instructions, they will also not do anything. For example, if we would have two airplanes next to each other on the platform, in one are a hundred suitcases, in the other, there are twenty, and each airplane has three men to get the suitcases out. Both teams would just do their task and that is it. One team would be done way sooner than the other and leave, and the other team has to work way harder and longer. In the Netherlands, one of the three people on the 20-suitcase-team would say: ‘Hey, I will help the other team, they have a lot more suitcases than us’. But in Spain, they think: ‘this is what my boss asked me to do so I will just do it, and then I am done. An order is an order’. They do not take initiative, but that is also not appreciated in Spain. The old-school Spanish boss really is the boss and can raise his voice if he wants, to showcase his power. In the bigger, more internationally orientated firms, where younger people work, this is also not being done as much.”

The Dutch could perceive this cultural standard as a lack of creativity and taking initiative or responsibility for their work. If you only follow the instructions your boss gives you, you are seen as an employee who is not very valuable and is not involved in improving the business. Challenging instructions from the boss is a good thing, it keeps the boss on top of his or her game. It could also be an opportunity to show your opinion and eventually improve the process or the task that you need to complete. Discussing with colleagues or your boss can be very fruitful, it could lead to interesting conversations and maybe even an opportunity to start a new project or get some recognition. The Dutch would feel repressed in this situation where they cannot speak their minds since they value their freedom in having discussions and finding the best way to fulfil a certain task. This has to do with the cultural value of self-determination that the Dutch cherish. Self-determination means that people feel independent and feel capable to make their own decisions and live with the consequences. When the Dutch employees would find themselves having a problem, the boss would be the last one who will hear about it. First, you are trying to fix it yourself, if that does not work, you will ask your colleagues, the last option is to go to your boss with the problem. But you do not like giving your problems to the boss because that seems like you are incapable of handling them yourself, which does not give a good impression.

Control

Control from the boss is an important standard. This means that the boss is regularly checking up on his or her employees to see if they are doing their job well. "A lot of micromanagement is being done and there is not a lot of freedom for employees" (expert, 2021). In Spain, this is very normal because the employees do not necessarily feel responsible for the work they deliver, the boss is almost obliged to do this. The Spanish employees just wait to get a task, and then complete it. Whether it is done well, great or bad, is not important. They got their task and they fulfilled it, that was what the boss asked them to do and that is it. Moreover, they do not feel responsible for their task so when the boss is not around, also (almost) no work is being done, because they are not being checked at that moment.

"We got a new boss, a woman, she was used to working with Spaniards only, and our team had all kinds of nationalities. She was used to having Spanish employees work for her and treating her employees like they are Spanish. So, she was used to controlling them and asking: 'Where have you been today? What did you do today?' That is the last thing that you should ask me. I used to work during the weekends and in the evenings, just a lot. And sometimes I got assignments when I was off and then I always said: 'Okay I cannot do it right now, but let the customer know that I will take a look at it tomorrow'. And then the customer was happy. Then she said to me that day: 'I want to know where you were today.' And then I just lost my trust in her, and then my motivation also took a fall. I kept working for her for half a year longer to see if it would change. Then my Austrian colleague even took it a bit further when he became my boss. He would call my customers to ask them if I really met with them today. That was it for me. I went looking for another job. I really appreciate it if someone tells me if I am not doing my job well, just tell me, but don't go checking up on me behind my back. And if I am working in the evenings, which is okay with me, but then don't tell me that I cannot leave an hour early the next day."

"I cannot work from home, I have to be at the office. Because as soon as I leave the premises, they are having a small party in the factory, and then everything is being done with much less speed."

When a Spanish boss treats a Dutchman in the Spanish way regarding control, the Dutch could perceive this cultural standard as quite annoying or get the feeling that the boss does not trust them with their skills. As mentioned above in striking quote one, Dutch do not like being checked and controlled, they could feel oppressed when they are working with a Spanish superior. Self-determination is also playing a role here. This aspect concerns the ability and the desire to make decisions by yourself. The Dutch are also wanting to take responsibility for their choices and deal with the consequences. Moreover, in the Netherlands, employees like taking responsibility for their tasks and title. It means that when they are doing their job well, recognition will also be received. When this happens, the Dutch employees feel accomplished and motivated to do an even better job. The Dutch could get very annoyed when the Spaniards are not feeling responsible for the work they have

delivered, as mentioned in striking quote two. The Dutch could think: why are you not working as hard as when the boss is gone? You still need to reach your targets. The targets are not going to change when the boss is not there. Also, why do the Spanish not feel responsible for their work? It is their work, I would feel ashamed if I did my job, not in a proper way.

4.1.3 Working environment

Four Spanish cultural standards were discovered from the interviews which fit in the category 'working environment'. The cultural standards belonging to this category are; *conservativeness*, *bureaucracy*, *loyal to the job*, and *making money*. These Spanish cultural standards will be elaborated upon in further depth in the coming paragraphs.

Conservativeness

Spanish employees tend to be conservative in their work. It means that an employee prefers to leave the way things are, instead of changing (for a better or more efficient alternative). This behaviour is represented by one sentence that is used a lot in the Spanish language; '*Así se han hecho siempre las cosas*' (we have always done things this way). If there would be a procedure to do something in 10 steps that has been done like this for 10 years, and another person would suggest a procedure with only 5 steps, it will not be implemented just because of the simple reason that it is new. The Spaniards are often not capable of thinking outside the box. Moreover, the Spaniards are showing their conservativeness, not only at work but also at home. Spanish women are still expected to take care of the kids, cook and clean, and often they do not have jobs, this is because part-time jobs do not really exist in Spain, which makes it difficult for women who have kids to also have a job.

"I have worked with a lot of colleagues that made mistakes. And then I think: 'you should know this by now, why are you doing it like this?' They are just there to do their job, but they are not thinking one step further, they are just taking the easy way out. I always think: 'how can we make this process easier and faster?' But Spanish people do not think like this. The Dutch are way more efficient. That is why I really liked working with my Dutch colleague, we think the same way, and we made our work easier and more efficient. Spanish colleagues did not do this. They have been doing the same process for years, they do not want to change that, they do not like change."

"I had a business meeting with an elderly man and he barely even talked to me. Later I found out that he did not talk to me because I am a woman, he did not really care that I was the owner of the business we were supposed to talk about. So yes, the Spanish are very conservative. But I also have to say, this only happened once. And maybe he cut me some slack because I was not Spanish."

“I once said: ‘in the company where I worked before, we did it like this...’ Then they say; we have been doing it like this for years now, and it is working well. But it was not working well at all, but they would not listen to me. And they also did not want to discuss it with me, they did not want to hear anything about it.”

The Dutch may perceive Spaniards as being too traditional and not being innovative. Why would you keep doing something if it is not the best way? This is an aspect where there is a big clash between the Dutch and the Spanish. Lots of interviewees mentioned this aspect of the Spanish behaving conservatively. This is frustrating for the Dutch as they do not understand the value of having a bad and old system, while the new version is within reach. Dutchmen are very innovative and always trying to work on a more efficient way of doing a certain task. This is inspired by the value ‘utility’: Do only what is useful and do not waste time and money. ‘Why would you use an old system where everything takes 10 times the effort and 10 times the time to get it done, while a new and easier system is not that hard to implement? It will be worth doing.’ The Dutch employees do not understand why the Spanish do not want to change their ways for the better, it is improvement after all, why is that not interesting for the Spanish? Moreover, as shown in striking quotes two and three, the Spanish are also conservative when it comes to the roles of men and women. Regarding this aspect, the Spanish are also still very traditional. In the Netherlands, you cannot imagine being ignored by the person you are having a meeting with because he does not take you seriously, because you are a woman. Also, Dutch women cannot imagine being called at work by their husband who is telling them to come home and cook and clean the house.

Bureaucracy

Bureaucratic behaviour is noticeable in Spain. In institutional organizations, like the hospital, governmental councils, and the doctors’ offices, bureaucracy is a part of Spanish organizations. The way the governmental organizations are handling procedures and administrative issues are very lengthy and time-consuming. Government officials are eager to follow the procedure because that is what their boss pays them to do. Probably because no aspect of this can be done online, you always have to go to an office to get something done. Civil servants are not interested in helping in a quick manner, you often have to come back multiple times for the same issue. Also, civil servants are not especially helpful to foreigners, or rather, people that do not speak fluent Spanish. ‘*Venga usted mañana*’ (you can come back tomorrow) is what you hear when you go to government officials for help.

“There is a lot of bureaucracy in Spain, but that might also have to do with the language. Because if you speak Spanish, you get things done way easier than when you don’t. When we just got here, we realized how

much time everything takes. We needed to go to the city council, and there were all kinds of rules and we waited for such a long time. You can also hire someone who takes care of these kinds of things for you. They do that a lot more here than in the Netherlands. People in Spain are waiting in line for these kinds of things, the Dutch do not have enough patience for that. It happens that the one in front of you at the check-out starts talking with the cashier and they do not care that others are waiting. In the Netherlands there is always some kind of time pressure and stress, everything has to be taken care of as quickly as possible, and I still have problems with adjusting myself to the Spanish standard on this aspect.”

“Especially in the beginning, when I had to deal with governmental organizations, I was treated like a dog. If you need to take care of something you should be prepared that it could take 4-5 days before you get it done. The first time that you go there, you are sure that nothing gets done, you will not have the right documents, or you need to get another document from another organization. They will always try to send you elsewhere. That causes a lot of problems here. The same problems happen at the doctors’ offices and the hospitals. You really need to find your own way to take care of this.”

For the Dutch, bureaucracy is very frustrating to experience in Spain. In the Netherlands, procedures from the government can be handled online most of the time, which makes it easier to get done. If you cannot manage to do those things online, you can always drop by the offices and you will be advised on what to do, and most of the time, your problem will be solved for you by one of the employees. Even this will not take more than an hour. At the general practitioner and the hospital, you get good service. Also, administration- and other issues are handled with care and speed. In Dutch society everywhere, the striving for ‘utility’ can be noticed. Furthermore, it is frustrating for the Dutch that civil servants are not eager to help non-Spanish-speaking people. Normally, in the Netherlands, everyone is treated the same way when it comes to these issues, no distinctions are made between Dutch-speaking and non-Dutch-speaking citizens (equality). Then, the Dutch can get annoyed when they feel like they are not being served well and are not afraid to complain to the civil servant. This is not a very good idea in Spain since you need to show that you have respect for authority. The Dutch do not have as much respect for authority and can challenge people higher in the hierarchy very easily. They are used to getting into discussions with their boss or other people higher than them in the hierarchy, and civil servants are no exception.

Loyal to the job

From a Spanish perspective, loyalty towards the company and the boss is very important. The Spanish rather have a secure job than rotate jobs every once in a while. They do not feel the need to prove themselves in their job. The job is just for earning money and providing for the family. They prefer job security to job-hopping. It is very difficult to find a job in Spain, also because employees are not

interested in changing jobs. In addition, in Spain, there is a high unemployment rate. The consequence of this is that there are barely any job openings. And then the cycle continues. Spanish bosses might tell their subordinates: *'Tienes suerte de trabajar aquí. En otros lados...'*. This means: 'You should be happy that you are working here, in other places...'. This sentence sounds like a threat rather than a piece of advice. It could be said after an employee made some kind of mistake, and the boss finds out. Spaniards are inclined to be satisfied with the job they have and do not really seek any new challenges.

"Everybody is proud of their job and yes, I also think that people are still doing the same job for a long time because they do not really rotate, while they are not enjoying it (anymore). The employees at the airport, have been doing their job for multiple years. They are getting paid well because of this experience, then their salary goes up. They might not have the opportunity to get this salary at another job, so they just stay at this job, even though they do not really enjoy it anymore. For example, when the suitcases needed to be put on the plane, that is bad for your back, but the Spaniards keep doing it, sometimes even for twenty years. In the Netherlands, those are jobs for starters on the job market or immigrants who do not speak Dutch yet, but in Spain, it is not like this. In Spain, 50-year-old people are working at the supermarket. In the Netherlands, teenagers do this, then when they turn 18, they become too expensive, so they hire new 14-year-olds. Job rotating is not done in Spain, that is also why it is hard for students to find a job because the old people keep theirs."

The Dutch perception of this cultural standard of the Spanish could be that they are not focused on their career, they are less ambitious, and they do not get bored working at the same company and the same job for over 10 years. If you are working on the same job for so many years, then there is no improvement, you will not develop yourself personally and that is a pity (labor). The Dutch might think: 'How can you still be happy in the same position after such a long time without any kind of promotion?' Or the Dutch can perceive this behaviour as being lazy: 'You are not putting effort into self-development at work, why not? Why do you not want to improve yourself, and therefore increase how valuable you are to your employer and the company you work for?' In the Netherlands, people like challenging themselves and would rather quit a job that they do not like or where they feel they are not at their full potential and look for a better job. The Dutch also value reputation and achievements at work. They take responsibility for their tasks, and when something is successful, they can take credit for it, and this makes the Dutch feel happy and accomplished. "In the Netherlands, I would just change jobs if I did not feel challenged anymore. You could also always negotiate about what day you wanted to start and the number of hours you would work" (expert, 2021).

Making money

For the Spanish employees working is only important to have enough money to be able to provide for the family. Family is very important for Spaniards, they spend a lot of time with their families. Family is what the Spaniards live for, it is a very central aspect of their life. Every weekend the family comes together to have lunch or dinner for a few hours. This is what gives the Spaniards joy, and therefore, work comes in second place, or maybe even the third or the fourth. But, to be able to provide for the family, money is needed. For the Spanish, work is about making money, not about self-development, promotion, or recognition for skills and performance. Making money is the major purpose of work, and that is why this aspect is very important. Having a job gives you status. The higher up the hierarchy you are, the higher your salary and the more status you have. But it does not have additional value for the Spaniards. Working is considered to be some kind of punishment for the Spaniards, they are working in order to live, while the Dutch might be rather living to work.

“Now, we have a reward system in place. If the employees produce X amount of kilos, they can earn some extra money. And yes, that is working for now. They are very focused on making money. But I get that as well, because the amount you earn here, compared to the Netherlands, is quite low.”

This aspect could be interpreted by the Dutch as that the Spanish are not focused on their career and that they are not interested in doing their job well or getting recognition for their dedication and effort. It may seem like the Spanish have a job just to earn money, not for self-development or any other reason. People have jobs purely to earn money to be able to provide for the family. In the Netherlands, your job is about earning money to provide for your family, but also about building a reputation and a network and getting recognition for the work that you have done. Furthermore, it is also about self-development and learning new skills. This vision of working is very different from the Spanish standard and could also be a reason that work is more important for the Dutch than family when you compare it to the Spanish.

4.1.4 Family and friends

Five Spanish cultural standards were discovered from the interviews which fit in the category ‘family and friends’. The cultural standards belonging to this category are; *focused on family, hospitality, being closed off, personal relationships, and network*. These Spanish cultural standards will be elaborated upon in further depth in the coming paragraphs.

Focused on family

Family is the central subject in the lives of the Spanish. It is very normal that elderly move back in with their children when they cannot take care of themselves anymore. Therefore, in Spain elderly homes (barely) even exist. Spanish life is about spending time with family and eating with them. Especially on Sunday, which is family day. The Spanish would do nothing rather than just have lunch with the family from 14:00 to 19:00. Life is about family. Moreover, interviewees mentioned that the Spanish really enjoy life, which means in this case, spending more time with friends and family rather than working. They are taking every chance to do something fun and spontaneous. They go out for dinner more often, they even go out for lunch and drink wine during office hours. The Spanish invite family, friends, and sometimes even strangers over to their homes. Work is about making money and providing for the family. As also shown in striking quote two, if you are asked to work on the weekend, to do something important, you can just refuse, because it is the weekend, and then it is time for family and friends. Work can wait until Monday, even if it means that you are missing an opportunity. "In Spain, you cannot leave your parents as a student, you do not have money, because there are no jobs available. So, you keep living with your parents until you are 30, 35" (expert, 2021). Moreover, if you go on vacation, you can stay over with family that you do not even know. So, for example, the aunt of your aunt is someone with whom you are more than welcome to stay, even if you do not really know them, but just because it is family, you can.

"Everybody is taking care of each other. The grandkids are taking care of the grandparents and I really admire that. I live in a house with my dad, he is almost 90 years old and he needs help with a lot of things. My sister and her kids live very close to us, her kids are raised the Spanish way, which is also a lot of fun. For their grandpa, they will do anything. And when he has to babysit them, they are always very sweet to him. In the Netherlands, it is not like this very often. The grandparents are sent to an elderly home and that is it. That barely happens here. Here, everyone is close to each other and close with each other. And I really like that about the Spanish culture."

"Sometimes collaboration with a Spaniard is difficult. For example, a client called me yesterday and said that he was in Spain today and he was leaving in three days. He was wondering if I could arrange some viewings for him. And I said: 'yes of course'. And then I will work a bit more on the weekend and in the evenings, I do not mind. So then, I found some houses, but they are part of other real estate agents' portfolios, so I had to contact them. And then the issues arise. They said: 'No I can't tomorrow, and the day after it is Sunday so obviously I am not working. I can help you on Monday at 17:00'. So, I said, 'well, then my client has already left the country.' These kinds of things are very difficult to deal with in Spain."

The Dutch see the Spanish as very family-focused. It is very nice that elderly people do not have to go to elderly homes, however, the Dutch probably cannot imagine living with their parents again when they have children of their own, which must be a bit unusual for them. For the Dutch, family is less important than for the Spanish. Most Dutch families see each other on birthdays and anniversaries, maybe for a cup of coffee or for having lunch every once in a while. But having lunch or dinner with the whole family every Sunday is something that is not happening in the Netherlands. When you get back from work at 17:30, the Dutch will eat with their family at 18:00 (just the ones living in the same house) and then do a sport or hobby or sit in front of the TV for the rest of the evening. For the Dutch, there is more than family in life, such as work, which is considered to be fulfilling many needs of the Dutch, work is about self-development and recognition, rather than just making money. Moreover, younger people want to be independent from the standards and ideals of their parents, they have their own life. This is considered very normal in the eyes of the Dutch. This situation connects to the value of 'self-determination', which is a very important aspect of Dutch culture. The value consists of the idea that you have your own opinion and you stand up for yourself. If you do not have an opinion, you are not considered an independent individual (Enklaar, 2007).

Hospitality

The Spanish are really dedicated to being the best host or hostess they can be. For them, it is about honour and pride. Food plays a very significant role in the Spanish culture. So, if you make all the people at the table happy with your food and hospitality, you take pride in that. In Spain, also multiple 'groups' that have nothing to do with each other, like neighbours and friends can be invited to the same party, because why not? It does not matter at all, the more the merrier. Also, spontaneous visits from friends and family are perceived as nice and accepted.

"Everything is about food and making food for a lot of people. A while ago, I was walking my dog and then there were a lot of people having a barbecue and I was looking at them. And while I was looking, one yelled at me: 'Hey, come come, join us!' So, then I was invited to a barbecue with strangers. So, they are very hospitable. I stayed there for an hour and I was spoiled with super nice food and drinks!"

"When we just came here, we had guests, they were Spanish. Then we got a call from our neighbours, also Spaniards, and they said: 'We are coming over'. And I said to them, in a very Dutch way of course: 'Oh no, but we already have guests'. And our neighbours said: 'Oh no problem, we will join'. And then they came, and it was a lot of fun, they were all talking with each other. I find that the Spanish are very rich in this aspect of their culture. The Dutch are way more stressed in these kinds of situations, and will think: 'does it even fit? What if it does not fit?'"

The Dutch may perceive this cultural standard as something very welcome and nice. As soon as you are invited to a lunch or dinner at someone's house, you know you are going to be treated very well with nice food, wine, and nice people to talk with. This is not necessarily the case in the Netherlands. If you come over for coffee at someone's house, you get a piece of cake or a cookie and one or two cups of coffee. And as soon as the clock strikes 17:30, you are expected to leave because then dinner time is approaching. As mentioned in the striking quotes above, it is very normal to invite random people for dinner in Spain, whereas in the Netherlands, you do not do that. You also do not invite multiple 'groups' that have nothing to do with each other, at once. Spontaneous visits from friends and family are also not always appreciated. The Dutch are not as hospitable as the Spanish because of their value of utility. In the Netherlands, everything needs to be efficient and have a purpose. Talking with someone can be during a cup of coffee, you do not need hours for that. Moreover, the Dutch are more aiming for high performance at work rather than high performance at home and taking care of guests. The Dutch simply have other priorities.

Being closed off

Interviewees mentioned the cultural standard of being closed off (to strangers). This means that the Spanish take a wait-and-see position when situations change, so for example, when a new colleague is introduced. Maybe especially when this person is not from Spain and does not speak Spanish (that well). For the Spanish, strangers first need to earn their trust. Everyone who is not family, or a family friend, cannot be automatically trusted. As soon as this point of trust is met, they will treat you like family and they will do anything for you. So, this also works the other way around. If family and friends are trusted, and mean everything to a person, automatically strangers are just strangers and cannot be trusted. That is why it could be difficult for 'strangers' to become (close) friends with Spaniards. Moreover, colleagues are people you work with, not people you invite to your home. The Spanish really have a strict division between work and private relations. The expert mentioned that personal relationships are rather different depending on where you are in Spain. In the South, they are very open and after 10 minutes of talking, they make you feel like you have known them for years. However, in the North, the people are more closed off.

"I met my wife at work, that was a very positive experience. It is possible to gain their trust, it just takes a while. They are interested in you, until a certain point. If you are the new guy somewhere, they will always communicate with you nicely and properly. However, gaining their trust is a whole different level and can be very challenging."

“One of the first times that I was traveling by bus, something very funny happened. I already figured out where I had to go: ‘Los Christianos’. So, I get on the bus and I say ‘hola’ to the driver and try to ask him if he stops at ‘Los Christianos’, in Spanish. They really like it if you try, I am doing my best. So, he starts telling me a story, but I did not understand so I told him ‘poquito Español’, which means I only speak Spanish a bit. So, he explains to me where I have to get off the bus. Then at the next stop, two British ladies get on the bus. The Spanish do not really like the British, but they make money off of them. The first woman says in English: ‘Hello, I have to go to ‘Los Christianos’. I was sitting behind the driver and he looked at me and he shrugs his shoulders. So, I say to her: ‘Maybe you should try in Spanish?’ But she does not want to do that, so she asks again in English. And the driver corrects her but does not say anything else, he just makes them pay the ticket, and that is it. That is how it works. Just because you try, they like you and will help you”.

The Dutch may perceive this typical Spanish behaviour as not helpful (to colleagues) and unapproachable. Some Dutch mentioned that they find it almost impossible to get to the point of having a friendship with a Spaniard, it will take a lot of effort and time, and sometimes that is not even enough. Moreover, the Dutch mention that the Spanish are not very close with one another as colleagues. In the Netherlands, there is often a group of colleagues that you invite for your birthday, that is not the case in Spain (usually). In the Netherlands, everybody is working hard to keep the workplace in harmony and free of conflict. Consensus and ‘gezelligheid’ (having a friendly atmosphere) on the work floor is very important. Therefore, colleagues are sometimes also considered friends or in a way behave like friends, using informal language.

Personal relationships

Personal relationships are quite important in Spain. As also mentioned before, family is one of the most important things in the life of a Spaniard. The Spanish are very close with their friends and family. The Spaniards are really good at placing themselves in someone else’s shoes, there is a lot of solidarity. As soon as you are in their inner circle and gained their trust, they treat you like family and will do anything for you, they are very caring and helpful then. On the other hand though, if you are not in their inner circle, it might be very difficult to get there, and then you remain a stranger that cannot be trusted. This is a cycle that is very difficult to escape, especially for foreigners, they are even stranger strangers.

“The moment that they see you as friends or family, they will do a lot for you. Then you will be invited to have dinner with them and to join family reunions and other parties. What I see a lot these days is that for example, my plumber, I have been working with him for five or six years now. If one of my customers has a problem, I call him and then he says: ‘I will do that right away’, then he only wants to get paid for the materials

he uses, not for labour. If you have a good personal relationship with Spaniards, try to maintain it, they will do a lot for you and give you discounts for everything.”

According to the Dutch interviewees, to get into the inner circle of the Spanish, you really have to put a lot of effort and time into this. Personal relationships are difficult to build, but when you get there, the Spanish will treat you like family, and that is very valuable. But it is very difficult to get there. On the contrary, personal relationships with the Dutch are established rather quickly. You easily make an acquaintance with the Dutch, but this is a rather superficial friendship. As soon as there is a new colleague, neighbour, or just a stranger who you talk with on the street, a personal relationship is established. There is not really a need to build up a sense of mutual trust needed, trust is there automatically, and it is just ‘gezellig’. And ‘gezelligheid’ is very important in Dutch culture.

Network

Having a network is very important in Spain. This aspect is also intertwined with the one mentioned above, ‘personal relations’. As soon as you are an outsider who is not trusted, you must develop a network to get somewhere. You will have more difficulty finding a job when people do not know you for multiple reasons. First of all, nobody knows how good or bad you are. Secondly, there are no references to check (family and friends). Also, loyalty could be questioned since a ‘stranger’ has no direct benefit from being loyal to the firm. This is why having a network is so important in Spain. So, some things you only get done when you know the right people. It is very normal in Spain for the director of the company to hire members of his or her family. And when this director retires, (usually) his son, or sometimes his daughter will take his place, whether they are capable of doing the job or not. This is exactly how some people get jobs where they do not function well, and this can even cause businesses to go bankrupt. The criteria for hiring someone is not whether they are capable or not, but whether you want to help them get a job. To prevent this from happening in government jobs, there is an extensive examination system you have to pass, for example, if you want to become a teacher (expert, 2021).

“To get somewhere here, you really need to know people. If you want to apply for a job at a certain company, you need to know someone who works there, that happens a lot here. There are so many people who have jobs where they do not belong just because they have the right contacts, it is shocking. When I was working for a Spanish company, I had a manager who was friends with the director and he was very misplaced there. He did not know what he was talking about and all day he would just stare at an Excel sheet and he did not get what he was supposed to do with it. That can really destroy a company. On the one hand, it is good that friends and

family help each other. But on the other hand, this situation where I was in, caused a lot of trouble for the firm. And this could lead to people wanting to quit their job.”

“In the summer, when I worked at the bar, we got into this situation every now and then, where we ran out of beer in the middle of the weekend. And our suppliers do not work during the weekends. But because we had such a good relationship with them and we always paid on time, I could call them on the weekend when we had an ‘emergency’. Then our suppliers went to another bar where they had enough beer and they brought it to us. Just because you have a good relationship, they wanted to take that extra step for us, which was very nice”.

The Dutch may perceive this cultural standard as unfair treatment. It may feel like their talent goes to waste because less capable people are hired for the job. Wasting time or effort goes against a strong value of the Dutch culture, ‘utility’ (Enklaar, 2007). Moreover, Spanish behaviour also clashes with the Dutch value ‘equality’: If you know people, you can achieve things. If you do not have a very big network, you are very unlikely to get where you deserve to be. Things like studies, diplomas, or certificates could become very useless in cultures like this. This aspect could be very frustrating and unmotivating for the Dutch. Especially if you do not know anyone and you move to Spain to find a job, you can really have a hard time finding one, because you do not have any network yet. However, if you finally managed to build this network, the Dutch find it very valuable. As shown in striking quote two, a business relationship like this could give you a very nice competitive advantage over other bars that do not have that beer available right then and there. As soon as the network is established, it is very nice to use it. However, when this network is not established yet, it is very difficult to build one.

4.2 Interconnections among cultural standards: Underlying values

Often, cultural standards are not independent of each other. Some cultural standards are overlapping, and some could clearly belong to one specific group. The underlying values of a culture are the reason why a certain group of citizens behaves in a certain way. In the following chapter, four assumed underlying values are created based upon the cultural standards retrieved from the Dutch interviewees. The underlying values of the Spanish culture will be decomposed and elaborated upon in further detail. In this chapter, it will become clear how quotes from interviewees led to the creation of certain cultural standards (for this study), which in turn were categorized into an underlying value.

4.2.1 Autoridad

This underlying value expresses the Spanish way of dealing with authority. Authority represents the power that someone has over subordinates. These authorities could be the boss at work, but also police, parents, and teachers, their knowledge should never be questioned or challenged. When either of these figures asks you to do something, you will just do it. Starting discussions on whether the way that the boss suggests doing a certain task is the best, is not appreciated.

Figure 3 visualizes the connection between *respect for authority and power, bureaucracy, instructions, and control*. The results of the interviews show that a lot of Dutch people living in Spain notice that the Spanish have a lot of respect for authority and power. *Instructions* that the authority gives to its subordinates will be carried out without questioning the purpose or the way of working. *'I do not pay you to think, I pay you to do as I say'* is what a Spanish boss could tell his or her employees. Moreover, as instructions are given and carried out, the job is done, and the Spanish employee will wait until other instructions are given.

In addition, control is another cultural standard that was mentioned by the interviewees. In Spain, constant supervision of your work is being done by your boss. This means that you are asked where you were that day and what you did. Therefore, if the boss is not at the office, the employees are not checked upon and will also act like this. Why would you follow the instructions that were given to you by someone who is not checking on you? Furthermore, if you get a job as a government officer, you have a job for life. There is no need to be better at your job because of this. And that is why a lot of interviewees mentioned that there is a lot of bureaucracy in Spain.

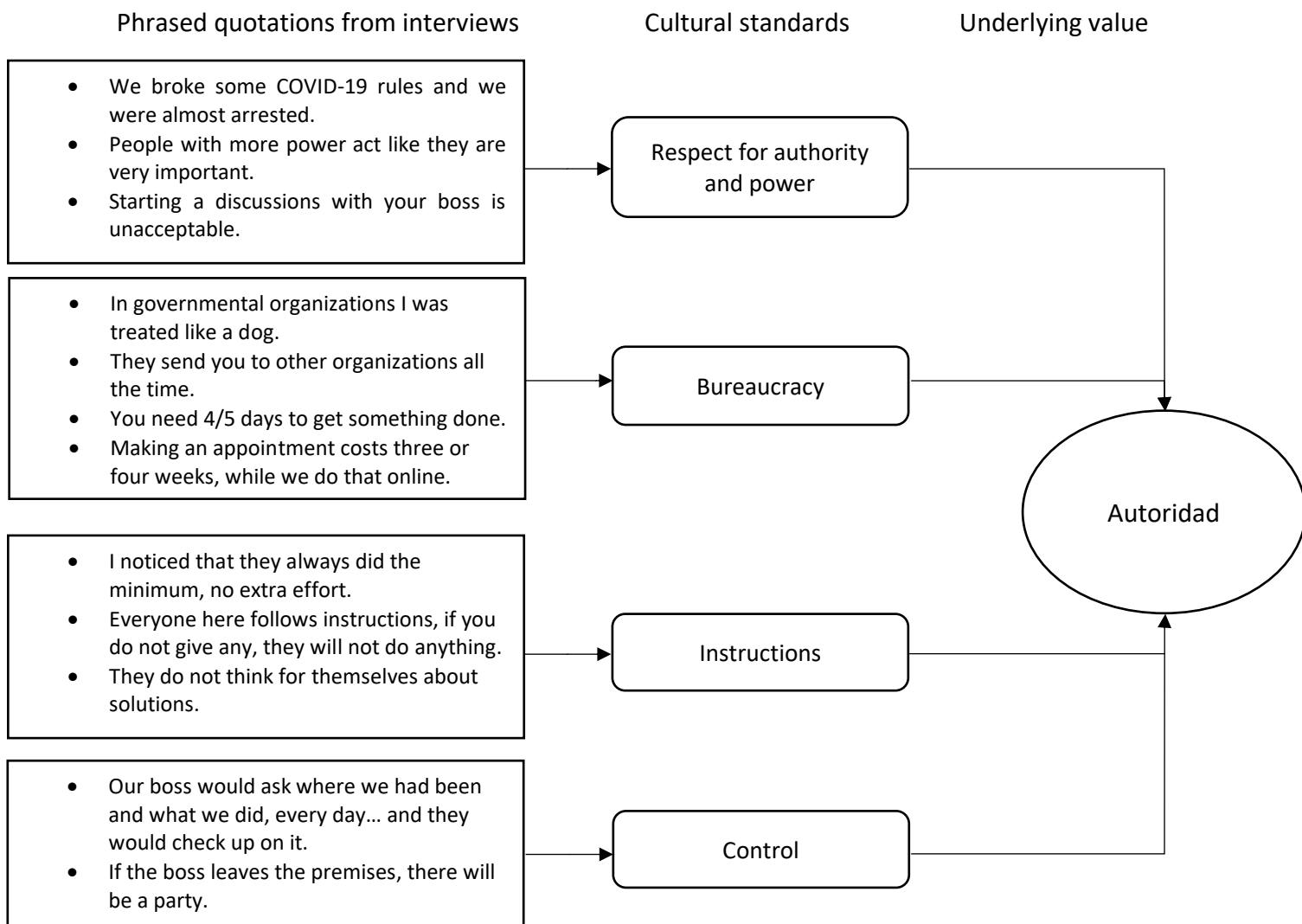


Figure 3: Underlying value of autoridad

4.2.2 Seguridad

This value expresses the need that the Spaniards feel for security. Security regarding their job, and income is very important. The Spanish really try to avoid risk at any time. Figure 4 represents the cultural standards of *conservativeness*, *loyalty to the job*, and *making money* as aspects of the underlying value; '*seguridad*'. *Conservativeness* is a cultural standard that was mentioned a lot among interviewees. Issues like never wanting to change a process or system that did not work just because they had been working with it for years came up multiple times. Conservativeness does not only play a role on the work floor, but also in the family atmosphere the Spanish are quite old-fashioned. It is still the norm that women do not have a job and cook and clean and take care of the kids. This image has become less popular over the years, but it is still like this in Spain.

The second cultural standard, which belongs to the underlying value of *seguridad*, is *loyalty to the job*. In the interviews, it was mentioned several times that the Spanish employees hold on to their jobs for a very long time without any changes in responsibility, title, tasks, or salary. In general, the Spaniards are very happy with the job they have, since it is quite hard to get a job in Spain at the moment. Moreover, if you challenge the boss, or make a mistake, there is a big risk of getting fired. Hence, nobody really dares to ask for a raise or a promotion. Another cultural standard that matches the underlying value of *seguridad* is *making money*. Spaniards are very interested in making money at their job. Money is the most important motivator for them. Reputation, promotions, self-development, or responsibility are not very interesting. Being able to provide for their family is their number one priority. The Spaniards really enjoy life, they ‘work in order to live’. This is where the Dutch and the Spanish clash, since the Dutch value their work a lot, and sometimes ‘live to work’ instead of the Spanish way.

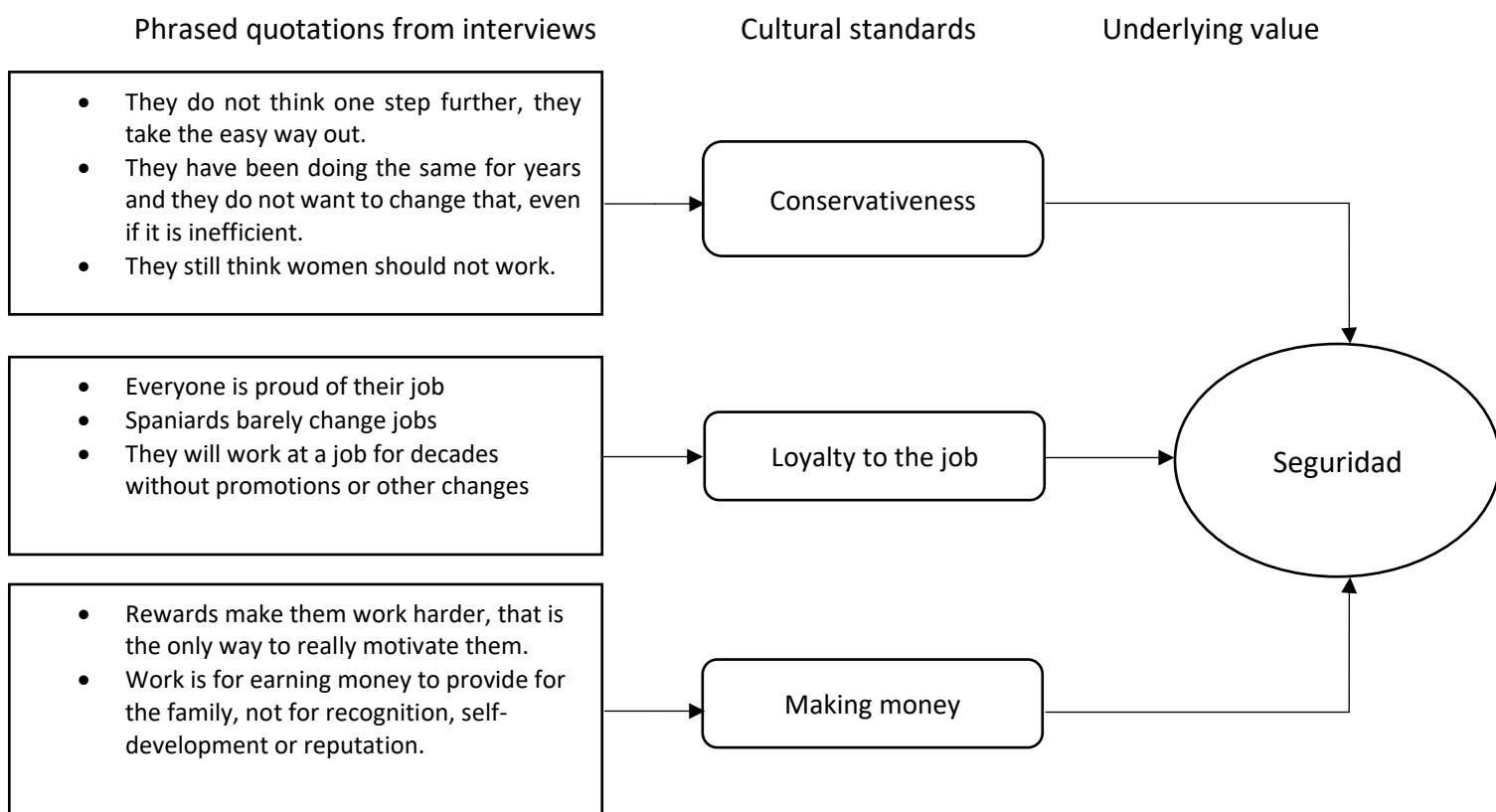


Figure 4: Underlying value of seguridad

4.2.3 Amiguismo

This underlying value expresses the Spanish way of dealing with others. This value was indirectly mentioned by a lot of the interviewees. The interviewees uncovered the following cultural standards that could fit with the underlying value of *amiguismo*; *personal relationships*, *network*, *focused on family*, *hospitality*, *not focused on service* and, *being closed off*.

Figure 5 represents the link to the phrased quotations from the interviews, the cultural standards, and the corresponding underlying value. The cultural standard of *personal relationships* is referring to how Spaniards manage their relationships with others. The interviewees mentioned that the Spaniards are very friendly and interested in you until a certain point. Relationships often remain superficial. However, when the relationship does further develop on a deeper level, the Spaniards will perceive you as family and will do anything for you. The cultural standard *network* is intertwined with the previous cultural standard. This concerns how personal relationships, when established, can help you a lot in finding a job, a house, or getting certain things done. In Spain, having a network is very important, it can provide a lot of opportunities. However, the opposite is also true.

Moreover, being *focused on family* is an aspect that almost every interviewee mentioned. For Spaniards, it is very important to be with their family as much as possible. Sunday is family day, and nothing can get in the way of that. The whole family is very close. Even if the grandparents cannot take care of themselves anymore, they will not be put in elderly homes, but their children will take them into their homes to take care of them. In Spain, family is everything. Another aspect that has some affiliation with *family* is *hospitality*. Being a good host is very important to the Spanish, it gives them a sense of fulfillment. The Spanish host is always trying to stay on top of serving enough food, making sure that everyone has a drink in their hand, and they feel responsible for their guests having a good time. Also, strangers are invited spontaneously to these gatherings. Which is quite conflicting with the cultural standard of *being closed off*.

As mentioned, *being closed off* is another cultural standard with the corresponding underlying value of *amiguismo*. This cultural standard is also intertwined with *personal relationships*. As mentioned before, interviewees noticed that it is quite difficult to develop very deep friendships with Spaniards. As soon as this stage is met, the Spanish will treat you like family and you are completely trusted. However, when this is not the case yet, you are a stranger, and strangers cannot be automatically trusted. To gain trust from the Spanish, you need commitment, effort, and a lot of time.

Lastly, the cultural standard of *not being focused on service* will be discussed. The interviewees noticed that they were not treated very well by Spanish employees who were working in some kind of service department. This happened at the doctors' offices, governmental institutions, or in the shops or grocery stores. This could have to do with the fact that not a lot of the interviewees spoke Spanish very well (at the beginning of their living there).

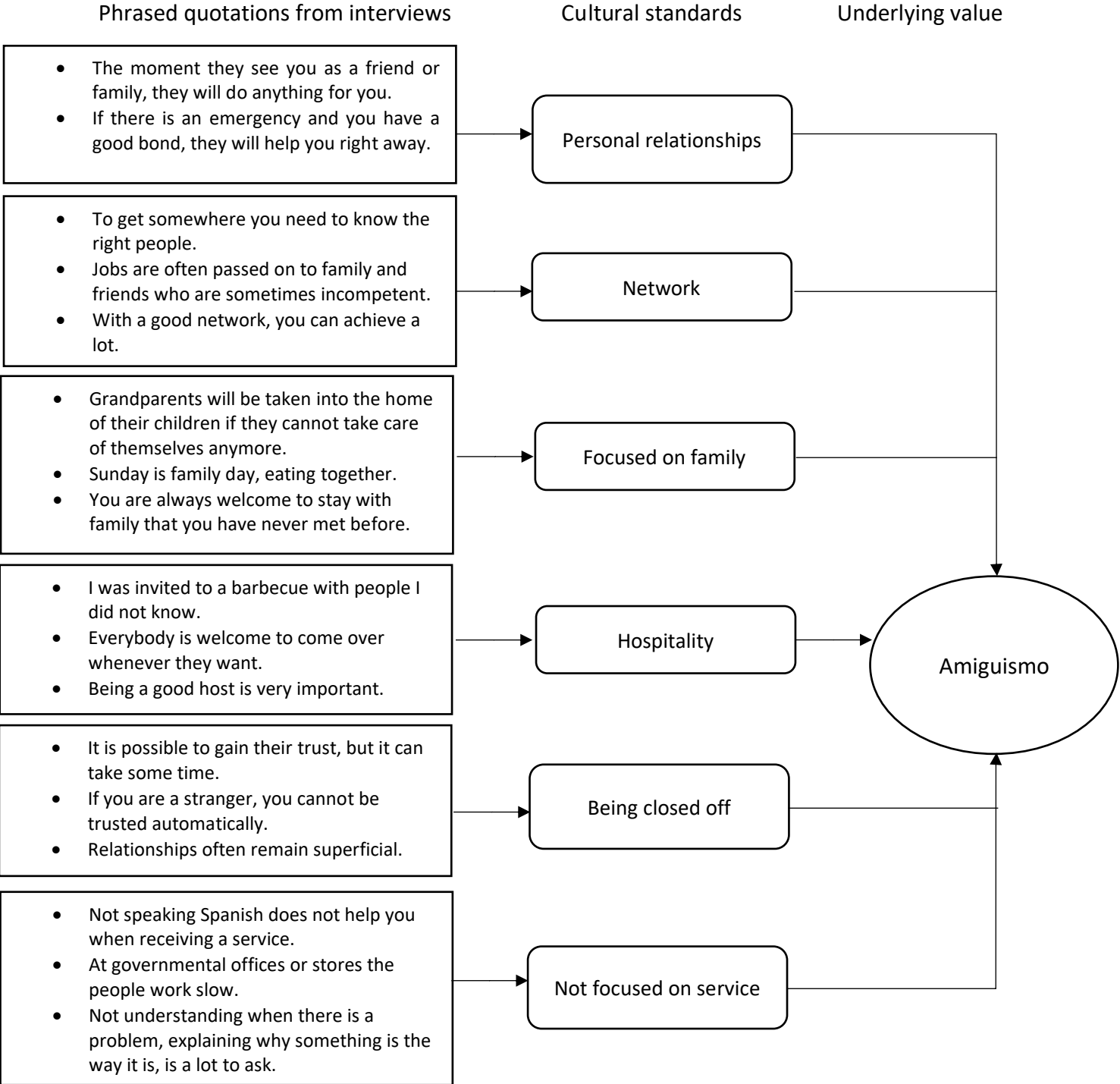


Figure 5: Underlying value of amiguismo

4.2.4 Honor

This value expresses the Spanish desire not wanting to step on someone's toes and the other way around. This value expresses itself in multiple forms, which are displayed in figure 6 below. The figure presents the cultural standards *criticism is a personal offense*, *not admitting mistakes*, *high spirits*, *showing expertise* and *pride in the country*. Giving criticism in Spain, especially as a Dutch person, can be interpreted as a personal offense. It is not normal and appreciated to do this in Spain. Especially with the Dutch being very blunt and bold in their statements while saying what they are thinking, instead of keeping it to themselves. The Spanish and Dutch clash on this topic.

Furthermore, *not admitting mistakes* is a cultural standard that was mentioned in a lot of interviews. Especially among people with authority (parents, teachers, doctors, and managers), this seems to be a big issue for the Dutch to understand. For the Spanish, admitting mistakes feels like failing and showing that you are a bad leader. *High spirits* is another cultural standard that seems to be present in the Spanish culture. Raising your voice, showing others that you have power, and yelling to make your point are very much part of daily life. Especially when you are a manager, teacher, parent, or someone else who has authority over others. *Showing expertise* was also something the interviewees noticed quite often. When it comes to their knowledge, their country, and their expertise, they are very proud and very eager to spread this knowledge to others. Being *proud of their country* is a cultural aspect that fits the previous cultural standard and with the underlying value of *honor*. The Spaniards are very proud of their local produce, their landscapes, and their history.

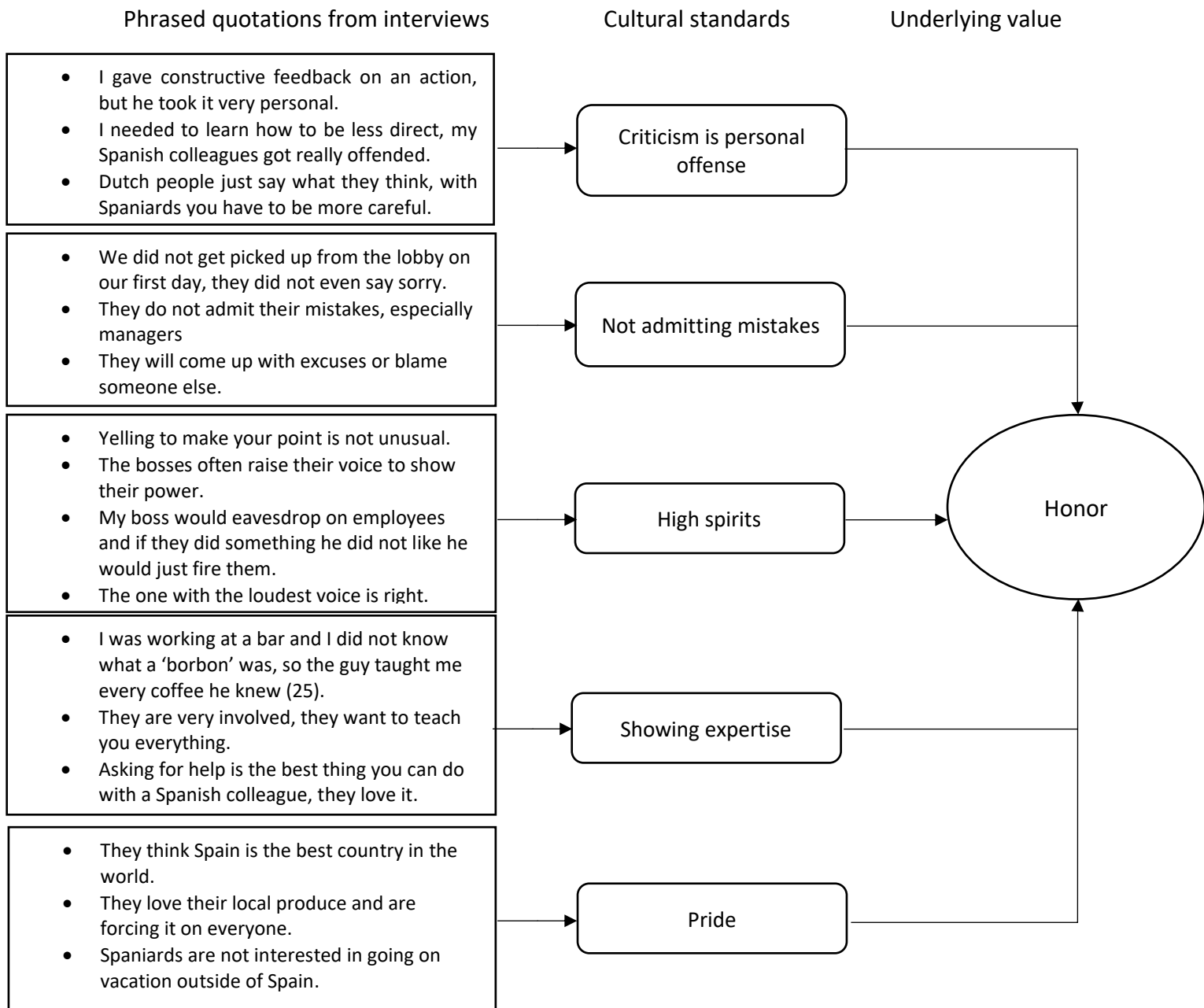


Figure 6: Underlying value of honor

4.3 Discussion with a cultural expert

To be able to verify these findings, a Spanish expert was interviewed. To go into more detail, the expert expressed some remarks on the outcomes of the interviews. She mentioned that 'cortesia' means that there is space for being late. So, for a party you would never come on time, that is just rude. For business meetings, it is also normal to start 10 to 15 minutes later than scheduled. If the meeting starts at 10:00, you are in the building at 10:00, but then you first go to the bathroom, get a coffee, chat with some colleagues, and then you will head to the meeting room. Moreover, the expert confirms the existence of the idea of beating the system called 'picaresca'. It is thought that stealing from the rich is okay. "My niece once entered the campsite without paying, and that gets rewarded" (expert, 2021).

To continue, the expert agreed that the rules are followed without thinking about them. At work, you are paid to carry out a task, not to think. A boss really wants someone who works for him to just do as he or she is told, nothing more and nothing less. And if you know you cannot do your task, you will never tell the boss. Because the unemployment rate is so high in Spain, there are 300 people qualified for one job. "My husband was offered a job he really wanted, but they expected us to move from the Netherlands to Spain the following week, so he could start the week after. This was not doable for us, so he told the company that he would love to take the offer if he could start two months later. This was rejected, and he did not get the job" (expert, 2021). Also, if you are doing more than just carrying out the task, so coming up with other solutions and showing initiative, you are stepping on the boss' toes. Then, you enter an area that is not in your jurisdiction. This could lead to you being fired, and the boss will hire someone who does not question his or her orders. "I have also noticed that giving feedback in Spain is totally different from giving feedback in the Netherlands" (expert, 2021). In Spain, you have to make sure that it is clear that you are giving feedback on the action, and not on the person. Moreover, admitting mistakes is a sign of weakness, so this feedback that you give, will not frequently be incorporated.

In addition, the expert recognized the cultural standard of '*conservativeness*' in Spanish culture. Employees do not want to change jobs because they are already happy that they have one. It is a 'do not push your luck' situation. "In the Netherlands, I would always negotiate my working hours and location, and if I got bored, I would change jobs" (expert, 2021). According to the expert (2021), her family was shocked to learn this. The importance of family is also confirmed by the expert. When going on vacation to another city in Spain, you are invited by the family of your family to stay in their house instead of getting a hotel. In Spain, family really trusts each other, even though they have not met before. Furthermore, the expert noticed that the Spanish show their emotions more often than

the Dutch. “Nobody ever gets angry in the Netherlands, and sometimes I think; are you even alive? The Dutch are calm and take control over their emotions, nobody is ever yelling”. In Spain, people are yelling all the time, they are cursing a lot and get angry easily. But afterward, all is forgiven, and everyone is friendly again, without the need to apologize.

On the other hand, the expert did not confirm the cultural standard of *‘not focused on service’* as typical Spanish behaviour. She mentions that she finds the Spanish more focused on service than the Dutch. “I was in Malaga and looking for a restaurant. I asked two men on the street where we needed to go, and they walked with us. Then they asked; ‘why do you want to go to this restaurant? We know a better restaurant! We will take you!’” They did not need anything in return, they were happy to help. Furthermore, the issue of bureaucracy in Spain was also confirmed by the expert. She mentioned that it is also a problem for the Spanish, not just for foreigners.

5. Discussion

The goal of this paper is to fill the gap in the literature by providing a more qualitative, systematic, rigorous, and etic approach to the Spanish cultural standards Dutch professionals perceive when living in Spain and working on the Spanish work floor. To find out, interviews were carried out with Dutch professionals who are working and living in Spain. After the interviews were carried out, the Critical Incident Technique was used to define moments in which the interviewees struggled with the Spanish culture. Identifying the overlapping answers was done through thematic analysis. With these answers, conclusions could be drawn regarding how Dutch professionals perceive the Spanish (working) culture. To accomplish the goal of this study, the following research question was formulated:

“What cultural standards are perceived by Dutch professionals working in Spain?”

In order to answer this central research question, two sub-questions have been formulated as well:

“What is the cultural logic behind these Spanish cultural standards?”

“How do Dutch professionals working in Spain cope with these Spanish cultural standards?”

5.1 Spanish cultural standards perceived by Dutch interviewees

The first goal is to identify the Spanish cultural standards perceived by the Dutch interviewees. According to Thomas (2010), cultural standards could be defined as “forms of perception, thought patterns, judgment, and interaction that are shared by a majority of the members of a specific culture who regard their behavior as normal, typical and binding” (p. 19). In other words, the usual behavior of a certain group where the people are connected because they live in the same country or city. Through the interviews, seventeen Spanish cultural standards from a Dutch perspective were identified. These are certain characteristics of the Spanish that the Dutch found outstanding, typical, or just simply different from their own usual behaviour. In the interviews, 248 critical incidents were reported. These critical incidents were categorized according to the Spanish cultural standards that were involved.

Section 4.1 identified seventeen cultural standards:

1. Respect for authority and power
2. Instructions
3. Family-focused
4. Honour/pride
5. Bureaucracy
6. Flexible with time

7. Being closed off
8. Not focused on service
9. Network
10. Conservativeness
11. Control
12. Emotions/high spirits
13. Loyal to the job
14. Flexible with rules
15. Hospitality
16. Making money
17. Personal relationships

These cultural standards can be clustered into the four different groups that derive from four underlying values. The value of 'autoridad' can lead to respect for authority and power, bureaucracy, (following) instructions, and control (of subordinates). The value of 'seguridad' can lead to conservativeness, loyalty to the job, and (focus on) making money. The value of 'amiguismo' leads to giving much importance to personal relationships, one's network, being focused on family, hospitality, being closed off (to strangers), and being not focused on service. The value of 'honor' can lead to feeling criticism as a personal offense, not admitting mistakes, expressing high spirits, and showing expertise and pride.

In addition, the cultural standard of *hospitality* could fit with either the underlying value of 'honor' or 'amiguismo'. It could fit with 'honor' since the host(ess) really takes pride in the organization of an event. The host(ess) is really trying to make everyone feel at their best and provide all the guests with the best food, drinks, and company. On the other hand, *hospitality* fits with the underlying value of 'amiguismo' because everybody is invited; friends, family, but also strangers. It really shows that the Spaniards are very social and want to make sure to include as many people as possible. For this research, *hospitality* is chosen to be more suitable as a cultural standard for the underlying value 'amiguismo'. This is done because, in this particular research, 'honor' is more focused on criticism, making and admitting mistakes, and stepping on other people's toes, mostly focused on the work floor.

5.2 The cultural logic behind these Spanish cultural standards

The second goal of this study is to be able to identify topics where the Dutch and Spanish clash. The big clashes that were identified were regarding the underlying values mentioned before, namely *autoridad*, *seguridad*, *amiguismo*, and *honor*.

5.2.1 Autoridad

The Spanish might perceive rules as obligations that their boss or another authority made to keep an eye on them, to control their actions. The boss makes the decisions and is therefore responsible for these decisions, the employees are just there to carry out the tasks the boss asks them to do. The employees are happy with this division, they are not interested in responsibility, and that is why this works so well in Spain. However, the Dutch could perceive this as the Spanish not caring for their job. Moreover, responsibility is a normal part of your job in the Netherlands, you take responsibility for your actions, and the tasks that belong to your job. You want to do a good job, it gives you a feeling of fulfilment. The more responsibility the better, because that means that you can make your own decisions, and that is something the Dutch are interested in. This belongs to an underlying value of the Dutch, which is '*self-determination*'. Dutchmen like to be independent of their parents, their boss, or other authorities (Enklaar, 2007). They like having freedom of choice and they expect their boss to trust them with having a certain responsibility. And that is exactly where the Dutch and the Spanish clash on this topic.

Taking initiative is part of your job as well, from a Dutch perspective. If you do not take initiative, you are not very valuable to the firm. Coming up with fresh ideas or challenging your boss encourages everyone to be alert and strive towards improvement, it is seen as a very positive aspect by the Dutch. In Spain however, this is not done, which the Dutch can perceive as being lazy or not caring for the firm. However, if you would challenge your boss in Spain, you are stepping on the boss's toes and questioning his capability as a leader. And this can get you into a risky situation regarding your job security. Controlling bosses are another aspect that the Dutch do not appreciate. It gives them the feeling that their boss does not trust them. In Spain however, this needs to be done because the employees do not take responsibility for their tasks. The boss has to make sure that everyone is doing their job correctly and within the right time frame.

On the other hand, the current study did not identify the Spanish value of *picaresca*. This idea was discovered when the expert was interviewed. *Picaresca* is the idea that you are smarter than the system, smarter than the authority (Meaney, 2010). If you get into a place where you have to pay an entrance fee and you managed to not do that, your parents will be proud of you (expert, 2021). Because this value was discovered in the last interview carried out for this research, the other interviewees could not react to this. If this potential value were to be discovered earlier on in the process, other interviewees could have gotten the chance to confirm or deny the importance of this topic. However, *picaresca* seems to fit with the cultural logic of being flexible with rules. This value is certainly clashing with the Dutch since there is a bigger emphasis on the *truth* for the Dutch (Enklaar, 2007). If a Dutch kid would tell his parents he got in without paying an entrance fee, the Dutch parents would send the kid back to the entrance, make the child apologize, and pay the entrance fee anyway.

In addition, bureaucracy is another aspect where the Spanish and Dutch values clash. In Spain, government officials have their job for life, they cannot easily get fired. And that is probably why they are not interested in providing help in a quick manner, neither for the foreigners nor for the Spanish. '*Puedes volver mañana*' (you can come back tomorrow) is often used to say that the problem will not be fixed right away (Meaney, 2010). This is typical of the Spanish culture and is also what the interviewees noticed when working in Spain. Moreover, the Spanish government officials have issues with helping foreigners for the simple reason that they do not or barely speak English. This makes it very difficult for the government officials as well as for the Dutch. According to Meaney (2010), it is beneficial to consider hiring a '*gestor administrativo*'. This person speaks Spanish and is educated in handling all bureaucratic procedures. "You can of course deal with these matters yourself but are likely to find the paperwork not only confusing but also time-consuming and possibly even stressful" (Graff, 1993, p. 74).

5.2.2 Seguridad

The underlying value of the Spanish culture regarding security has several aspects. The Spanish do not value innovation. Changing a process or a system at the workplace could be perceived by the Spanish as something risky or difficult. They would rather leave things as they are than change them (for the better). In the Netherlands, striving towards making all systems and tasks as efficient as possible is the norm. The goal is to get everything done with the best quality, least amount of steps, and the least amount of time spend on the task. The Dutch do not understand why the Spanish would not improve a process. 'What is the reason that the Spanish want to keep things slow and inefficient?' is what a Dutch person could ask himself. Regarding innovation, the Spanish are avoiding risk.

However, in the aspect mentioned earlier, the Spaniards are not showing a lot of risk-avoiding behavior when it comes to the aspect of planning. Keeping promises, like being on time for meetings is a critical Dutch value (Enklaar, 2007). Whereas the Spanish prefer not to make appointments at all, and when they are made, it is normal for the Spanish to start later than intended. The Spaniards do not mind not knowing what is going to happen at a certain time during their day or sometime during their week, spontaneous visits or activities are preferred. While the Dutch appreciate structure and planning. When meetings between Dutch and Spanish are set, the Spanish could be 10 minutes late while the Dutch were already in the meeting room 5 minutes before the supposed start of the meeting. This is where the Dutch could get frustrated with the behaviour of the Spanish. The Dutch might feel like the Spanish are disrespectful by being late.

According to the Spanish, you work because you need to make money to provide for your family. In the Netherlands, you work because you want to build a reputation, climb the corporate ladder, get better or quicker at your job, continuously improve yourself, work with colleagues on projects and be an asset to the company you work for. Of course, salary is also important, but that is certainly not the only aspect that is important for the Dutch regarding work. For the Dutch to work harder, you can offer a promotion or a new project. For the Spanish to work harder, the only way is to give them more money. When productivity needs to be increased, putting in place a rewarding system works really well in Spain.

Lastly, loyalty towards the job was an aspect the Dutch found different from their own standards. The Dutch are very career-focused, while in Spain, it is very normal to stay on your job for a long time, sometimes even decades without a change in responsibility, function, tasks, or promotion. The Dutch do not understand why someone would accept this. Striving towards growth is what is interesting for Dutchmen when it comes to their job. 'Not going forward is going backward' is what could be said by the Dutch when it comes to this topic. This cultural standard is once again, clashing with the Dutch perception of the interviewees.

5.2.3 Amiguismo

In Spain, relations are very important. Because Spaniards are less protected by the law, they are looking for other ways to protect themselves, in this case by surrounding themselves with people that can be trusted. Therefore, the Dutch find it quite difficult to develop really personal and deep connections with the Spaniards. They might feel like because they do not speak Spanish (that well), they are not good enough to be friends with the Spaniards. Also, in Spain, it is not very usual to go for

drinks, dinner, or birthday parties with your colleagues. Colleagues are the people you work with, and when you are done working, you do not want to be with them, you want to be with your family. While in the Netherlands, colleagues are often welcome at birthdays or other social activities. It is also normal to go out for lunch with colleagues and come over on the weekends for a cup of coffee.

The Dutch feel like the Spanish employees rather talk with their colleagues than actually do their job. This could also have to do with the Spanish not being very service- or customer-focused. If the Spanish feel offended for some reason, they could start defending themselves, which will be perceived by the Dutch as rather aggressive behavior. In Spain, if you are waiting in line at the grocery store and the cashier is talking with her colleague, you just wait. The Dutch try to use their time as efficiently as possible and waiting in line at the grocery store does not qualify as efficient. The Dutch would get frustrated in such a situation, whereas the Spanish would just start chatting with others who are also waiting.

5.2.4 Honor

Honour is a very important aspect of the Spanish culture. Apologizing for mistakes is something that is barely done by managers, and employees, but also in a private atmosphere. In the Netherlands, admitting mistakes is not seen as a weakness, but as taking responsibility. Everyone makes mistakes and we can learn from them. The reason for the Spanish not admitting their mistakes could be that they feel like they have failed as a leader or as some other kind of role model. This is frustrating for the Dutch as the Spanish will make up excuses or blame others for their mistakes. Since the Dutch are known to be very straightforward and blunt, which could be perceived by the Spanish as rude, issues might evolve regarding this. The Spanish feel offended when getting critique from someone. And especially when the Dutch give critique, in a blunt way, the Spanish can completely shut down or show their emotions, which will, in turn, be perceived by the Dutch as being aggressive. This could cause quite some trouble between coworkers. Moreover, the Spanish like to show their expertise. They feel very proud when they have obtained certain knowledge about a certain topic and they want to express that to others. On one hand, the Dutch could find this very helpful. However, on the other hand, the Dutch could also perceive this as the Spanish being arrogant.

5.3 Cultural clashes

The most often mentioned cultural standards will be described in this paragraph. These four cultural standards have all been mentioned thirteen times out of seventeen interviews. This paragraph also describes some critical incidents from the interviews, where the strength of the emotion involved could be retrieved to see how big this certain event clashes with the Dutch values. Also, how did the Dutch deal with these clashes? This question will also be answered in the following paragraphs.

5.3.1 Respect for authority and power

As mentioned before, the Spanish have a lot of respect for authority and power. When a Dutch employee would start a discussion with his or her Spanish boss, Spanish employees would look at you like you are crazy. It is very unusual for them. While the Dutch do not mind a good discussion with their boss, because the Dutch boss would actually value their opinion, a different perspective on a certain issue. According to Enklaar (2007), the Dutch sense that you should not think you are better than someone else, even if you have a higher status. While the Spanish bosses like showing their power to their subordinates. Also, in Spain, the boss tells you what to do and you just do it, starting a discussion about a task is not appreciated. While Dutch people like discussions, making their own choices and assuming that they can state their opinion. Nobody can tell them what to do. In Spain, one has to be very mindful when communicating something, especially to someone higher up in the hierarchy. Questioning someone who has authority over you is unacceptable. On the other hand, it is also unusual for Dutch bosses to micromanage their Spanish employees as to how it is done in Spain.

To continue, another interviewee, who is the boss of Spanish employees, mentions that he feels very accepted and respected by the Spanish employees compared to Dutch employees. Spanish employees will do as you say. The Dutch will get into discussions with their boss, but will also come with initiative and have a proactive mindset, unlike the Spanish. Another interviewee mentioned that when he was the boss, all the Spanish employees came to him with questions. The employees wanted the boss' approval on everything. However, he thought that very inefficient. He thought that they needed to think for themselves and find a solution independently. This describes the role of a Dutch boss very clearly. The best way how a Dutch boss could take care of this issue is to clearly state his or her opinion. As said before, if you tell Spanish employees what you want from them, they will obey. If you want something from the Spanish employees that they are not used to, like providing ideas to their superior or criticizing someone with a higher status, it might take a while for them to adapt. However, when given enough encouragement, eventually the Spanish will give you what you want. The best way for the Dutch to cope with this *respect for authority and power* as an employee would

be to remember that the responsibility of a task is not necessarily on them, but more on the boss. And that is why the boss can be so controlling.

5.3.2 Instructions

Instructions that are given by some sort of authority to a Spanish employee, are carried out without question, with the correct supervision. A Spanish boss could say *'I pay you to do as I say, I do not pay you to think'*. When the Dutch are given a task that is not manageable in the given time frame, they will get in touch with their boss to inform them about it. However, this is not done in Spain. In Spain, you do not tell your boss that you are not able to complete a task. You just wait for them to ask about it, and then *'I am working on it'* is the response that will often be given. There is no honest conversation between the supervisor and the subordinate when it comes to this topic. A Dutch boss could get frustrated by this. One would say *'if you are not able to finish it, just tell me, then we can find a solution, if there is no communication, I cannot know that you are not going to finish it'*. For this reason, deadlines in international firms could also be a tricky aspect on the work floor.

For example, one of the interviewees was in a situation where they were having problems with their machine, and it needed to be repaired. The person responsible for maintenance said that it would take two hours. The men working on this machine had to do something else for that time. They would rather sit with each other and eat a sandwich than do something useful. This confirms again that the Spanish will not take initiative when their work is *'done'*. A Dutch (boss) needs to be aware of this and make sure that, at all times, the Spanish employees have a task they are working on. This issue could be tackled by making sure there is good communication between the parties. Try to emphasise that it is crucial to have clear and honest communication about projects and their progress, especially when it comes to making deadlines.

To continue, one interviewee stated that he was the manager of a team of only Spaniards, and he learned that they are not used to getting criticism and being open to their boss. It took a few months before they found the courage. He told them that he hired them because of their skills and that everyone can make mistakes, even the boss. That was the point that they started to see him less as a boss, and the dynamic of the team became more transparent and honest. To conclude, if the Dutch boss could make it very clear to the employees that he or she requests and appreciates honesty and that the employees should not be afraid to say *'no'* or to tell the boss that completing a certain task will not be possible in a certain timeframe, the issue regarding this cultural difference should be solved.

In addition, another interviewee said that the boss makes the decisions, and you just have to do as they say. In the Netherlands, everyone gives a bit of input and everyone is (partly) responsible, this is just not how it goes in Spain. To add to this, an interviewee mentioned that his boss was very controlling. The boss would ask him what he had done all day and with who he met, and then the boss would call these people to confirm the story. This made him very frustrated and he ended up quitting his job. He could not stand the feeling that his boss did not trust him. From his point of view, the situation was unbearable. For the Spanish manager, on the other hand, it was normal to check up on someone like that. The Spanish tend to only do something when being checked. Also, if the boss would not be at the office, employees would not be working. So, for the Spanish manager, this was very normal behaviour. The Dutch should be aware of this, and if it is bothering them too much, it should be clearly communicated to the manager. It should be mentioned that the Dutch employee does not feel comfortable and not trusted when the manager's behaviour is very controlling. However, it will be difficult to get the Spanish manager to listen to 'advice' or 'criticism' from a subordinate. But this is an important issue that the Dutch have to mention, otherwise, this could become quite a big issue for both parties, as the anecdotal evidence from the interviewee has shown.

5.3.3 Family-focused

This aspect would not be identified as a clash in the sense that the Dutch value this aspect of the Spanish culture a lot, but it is very different from the Dutch culture. In Spain, family is what life is about, whereas in the Netherlands, work has priority. Every Sunday, the whole family comes together for lunch for half of the day. In the Netherlands, you maybe see your family only on birthdays. The Dutch really value this aspect of the Spanish culture. It is said that the Spanish are very loving and take really good care of their family and family would do anything for you. All family-related issues that could come up in the working environment, like illness or death, are immediately accepted on the work floor in Spain.

According to Hofstede (2011), Spain is a more masculine country than the Netherlands. In a feminine culture, it is important to keep a healthy work-life balance, which is an interesting aspect of this research. On one hand, the Dutch interviewees mention that they find working very important. It gives them a purpose, they feel fulfilled when working, achieving goals, and earning a reputation. However, the Spanish prioritize other aspects over working, and yet they have a higher score on masculinity than the Netherlands, which seems not in line with the results of this research. This could have to do with the 'nine-to-five-mentality' that some of the Dutch have. Because, even though the Spanish do not prioritize work, they do spend more time on the work floor than the Dutch. However,

because of the Spanish masculine culture, it is not unusual for Spanish women not to have a job. This is an aspect where the Spanish and the Dutch clash a little. The Dutch really cannot wrap their head around this behaviour. They could just call the women 'lazy' or 'not ambitious'. The Dutch really need to try to understand that work is not a priority in Spain, and not be so critical regarding this aspect. Dutch women often like having a job, it makes them feel independent and fulfilled. Then the kids just go to daycare. The two cultures clearly have different priorities in life, which is normal. But it is difficult to see this from the opposite perspective.

To continue, an interviewee mentions that the moment when the Spanish see you as their family, they will do anything for you. This shows how important good relationships and a good network is in Spain. Moreover, a different interviewee was in a situation where the Spanish chose family over work. She found it difficult sometimes to collaborate with the Spanish because of this. She expected the Spaniards to be willing to work on the weekends when it was necessary. However, the Spaniards wanted to be with their family on the weekend. This anecdotal evidence corresponds with the findings from Enklaar (2007) on the Dutch value *labor*. The Dutch find working, earning a promotion, and having a reputation fairly important. Whereas Spaniards work because money is needed to provide for the family. Therefore, the aspect of being family-focused is a challenge for the Dutch to understand. Family is not such a big aspect of the Dutch culture, and the Dutch should know that in Spain, family will always have priority.

On the other hand, according to Hofstede (2011), the Netherlands has a more *indulgent* culture, while Spain has a more *restrained* culture. Since the results of this research suggest that the Spanish prefer spontaneous activities over scheduled activities and the fact that working is not a number one priority, it could be expected that Spanish would be more of an *indulgence* culture (compared to the Netherlands). However, since freedom of speech and a perception of personal life control are aspects of *indulgent cultures*, it also seems logical that the Netherlands has a higher score here than Spain.

5.3.4 Honor/pride

The Spanish are very sensitive when it comes to their honor and pride. Insulting someone is the last thing you want to do, so giving critique is too risky. However, the Dutch do not have any problems stating their opinion and giving feedback or critique to someone. This causes quite some potential for issues. It happens that the Dutch give feedback to the Spanish in a very Dutch, blunt way. The Spanish sometimes do not know how to deal with this. Therefore, they can get very aggressive and defensive

(from a Dutch perspective). In Spain, however, showing your emotions is part of daily life. In the Netherlands, yelling and cursing could be perceived as aggressive, and this does not fit in what would be considered appropriate behavior, especially not on the work floor. The interviewees mentioned that they would find it quite strange when they heard people yelling on the work floor, so this research is in line with the findings from Enklaar (2007) regarding the value of *moderation*.

To avoid this, the Dutch should be careful with how they phrase their feedback to the Spanish. 'You did X wrong' will cause a lot of problems. However, 'X went wrong, I do not know if it was you or me, maybe it was me, I do not know, but I want to prevent you from making the same mistakes, so I would really like to take some time to look at it together' would probably get the desired response from the Spanish. This was one of the most frequently mentioned issues that the Dutch experienced while working in Spain. However, you just need to be aware of this. As soon as an issue of this sort happened, you will experience that the Spanish do not really accept the Dutch way of expressing their feedback. And the next time the same person has to give feedback to a Spaniard, he or she will approach the situation differently, more carefully, since you do not want to make the same mistake.

Another interviewee stated that he was having a conflict with a colleague because their ways of managing the team were different. The Dutch confronted the Spanish about this because the team was not performing very well. The Spanish boss was overwhelmed by the Dutch bold statement and left the room. This interviewee learned that he cannot approach Spaniards the same way he would approach a Dutch person. When a similar issue would come up, he would be aware of his 'automatic' or 'natural' response and he would adjust this to a more careful and gentle response.

A third interviewee was confronted with the Spanish underlying value of 'honor' in another way. She was working on a project and this project was not going so well and she wanted to find out why. It turned out that the team was not functioning because no one dared to say anything because they were afraid to hurt someone's feelings. She found it difficult to solve this because nobody wanted to speak up about the problems. Then, she told them to do it 'the Dutch way' and she spoke her mind. Then, the team was more accepting of the fact that she was being very straightforward. When working in a foreign country, you need to be able to adjust and be flexible with the way you are approaching certain situations.

As mentioned by the interviewees, giving feedback to one another is often not done because everyone is avoiding stepping on anyone's toes. This corresponds with the research from Meaney (2010). Meaney (2010) also identified another aspect of the Spanish culture which has to do with honor and pride; *machismo*. However, *machismo* was only mentioned by two interviewees in this research. This would consider all men between the age of 50 and 60 with high status and an expensive car. *Machismo* was only mentioned twice, of which one was an interviewee who had been working in Spain for over 25 years. This could point to the possibility that *machismo* is slowly fading away from the Spanish culture.

5.4 Theoretical implication

This research contributes to the literature in two ways. The first aim of this study is to go beyond superficial literature and provide anecdotal evidence on the differences in culture between the Spanish and the Dutch on the work floor. Furthermore, this study offers a qualitative investigation of the underlying values of Spain, which cannot be provided by quantitative research. For example, Hofstede (n.d.) provides a clear overview of six cultural dimensions. However, these findings are rather superficial. While other studies like Meaney (2010) are quite specific, the study is not focused on the Dutch perspective. Moreover, there is a lot of information on both cultures separately, but not (a lot) of information on the comparison between the two. The literature available today is lacking detail and is mostly using quantitative models. This research contributes to the literature by adding a systematic and rigorous approach by retrieving information on the Spanish working culture from a Dutch perspective. This is where the study has filled the gap in the literature and proven its academic relevance.

5.5 Practical implication

This advisory report is concluded based on the interviews carried out. Dutch employees could use these outcomes to improve their relationship with Spanish bosses and employees. Then, Dutchmen can adapt themselves better to their Spanish colleagues and superiors because a better understanding of the Spanish culture among the Dutch is achieved. And therefore, efficiency will be increased.

Actions that the Dutch can take in order to improve the relationship on the work floor between them and the Spanish could be;

- Learn Spanish. Trying will already help a lot. The Spanish really appreciate it when foreigners show interest in their country (by learning their language).
- Avoid giving (direct) feedback. If giving feedback is necessary, take a gentle approach. Make the Spanish feel like you are helping them, not telling them they did something wrong.
- Understand that family is the number one priority of a Spaniard.
- Be patient. Bureaucracy is a problem, for foreigners as well as for Spaniards. Consider hiring a 'gestor administrativo' for arranging government-related tasks.
- Working is done because the money is needed, not because of wanting a good reputation, a sense of fulfillment, or self-development. Making steps in your career is not a priority. Understand that having a job is already an accomplishment, asking for a raise or promotion is out of line.
- Risk will be avoided. Changing jobs and becoming close friends with 'strangers' is a risk. The Spaniards are most comfortable when everything stays the same as it always has been (conservativeness).
- Understand that the boss is responsible for all tasks of the subordinates. Therefore, employees in Spain will often be micro-managed.
- The boss tells you what to do, and you should do that. Do not go into discussions or show initiative (right away). Then, the boss may feel threatened and you might run the risk of getting fired.

6. Limitations and future research

As all research has limitations, the limitations of this research will be displayed in this chapter. Although the number of interviewees was enough to reach an exhaustive response to be able to identify the Spanish underlying values, in line with the qualitative nature, more interviews could have highlighted some other topics which were not discovered in these 17 interviews. For example, the Spanish value of *picaresca*. On the other hand, this is not a critical limitation because 17 Spanish cultural standards were discovered in this study. For future research, however, the number of interviewees could be extended by interviewing more participants.

In addition, this research only considered English literature. Diving into the Spanish literature could have added interesting insights to better grasp the Spanish cultural values. Hence, future researchers may consider revising Spanish literature to add to the set of papers explored in the theoretical background. Moreover, although the quality of all the interviews was good, there were no participants who were situated in the North of Spain. According to the expert (2021), there is a clear difference between the Spaniards in the North versus the Spaniards living in the South. “In the South, in Andalusia, I noticed that the people are very open. You talk with them for an hour and it seems like you have known them for years”. In the North, however, we are more introverted, more closed off (expert, 2021). In future research, similar concepts regarding this research could be further explored by interviewing more Spaniards living in the North of Spain.

To conclude, the current study was solely focused on the Dutch interpreting the behaviour of the Spanish. So, only the aspects of the Spanish culture were highlighted that the Dutch perceived as different from their own. It is plausible that the Dutch did not notice other cultural standards that are similar to the Dutch values. Most likely, only the aspects that are clashing significantly with the Dutch culture were noticed. Therefore, further research into this could be interesting.

7. Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the cultural differences that Dutchmen perceive on the Spanish work floor. The results show that while the Dutch enjoy the Spanish climate, the country, and the idea of living and working in this country, there are often unforeseen issues regarding adapting to a different culture. Aspects such as how both cultures respond to authority, control and instructions from others with more power, or how others take care of each other in terms of honor and pride, are very different in both countries when they are compared. Moreover, the Dutch need to be aware of their own natural behaviour and adjust this so that it is suitable for the Spanish culture. Because the Dutch are very direct compared to a lot of cultures, and certainly compared to the Spanish, the Dutch need to approach situations like giving feedback or criticism with extreme cautiousness.

Additionally, if the Dutch find themselves in a situation where they have a Spanish boss, do not try to take charge. Do not question the boss and do what the boss asks you to do. According to Meaney (2010), the Spanish leadership style is very vertical. The CEO makes all the decisions. The Spanish boss just wants someone who does what they tell them to do, and they do not appreciate receiving feedback from subordinates. To continue, bureaucracy is another issue that caught the eyes of the Dutch who are working in Spain. Governmental officials are not interested in helping you in a quick manner, especially if you do not speak Spanish. On that note, it would be beneficial to at least try to speak Spanish when handling these kinds of tasks.

Furthermore, on the work floor, a friend or family member might be hired for a job rather than the person who is the most suitable. According to Meaney (2010), family and friends are very important. Even that important that the person hiring them is risking ruining the company because of hiring an incompetent person for a certain job. In this research, interviewees only mentioned five out of Meaney's (2010) nine values of the Spanish culture. '*Sense of self-worth*', '*religion*', '*tolerance and prejudice*', and '*manners*' were not (directly) mentioned by the interviewees. The reason for this could be that these values are not that evident in the Spanish culture (nowadays). Or because the Dutch did not necessarily notice these values because of the similarities with the Dutch culture. If this is the case, the Dutch would not be able to identify these values.

In general, the advice for Dutchmen moving to Spain would be to keep an open mind, do not disapprove of everything that is not 'normal' to them right away. Try speaking Spanish and be patient. The Spanish are usually slow-paced with everything they do so keep that in mind. To conclude, working in and with a different culture is difficult but can bring so many new insights and give very meaningful experiences.

“Experimentation provides a powerful tool for probing causal relationships, and we need both correlational and experimental approaches to enrich our understanding of international business phenomena, and to develop effective practical advice for international managers. Culture is such a fuzzy concept that we need to probe it with all the tools we have at our disposal” (Leung, Bhagat, Buchan, Erez, Gibson, 2010, p. 375).

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Appendices

Appendix A – Catalogue with questions for the interviews

Naam

Functie

Leeftijd

Hoe lang werkt u al voor dit bedrijf? Wat voor werkzaamheden doet u?

Ik begrijp dat u regelmatig contact hebt met Spaanse collega's. Hoe vaak? Waaruit bestaat het contact (telefonisch, e-mail, in persoon)? Wat bespreekt u met elkaar?

Wat is uw positie daarbij en wat is de positie van de Spanjaard(en) (rang, taakverdeling)?

In welke taal spreekt u met Spanjaarden?

Is de communicatie goed te noemen?

Hoe zou u de sfeer tussen Nederlanders en Spanjaarden beschrijven?

Is de samenwerking volgens u goed of kan hij beter?

Zijn de persoonlijke relaties volgens u goed of kunnen ze beter?

Ik wil graag over uw ervaringen met Spanjaarden spreken. Hoe zijn uw ervaringen met Spanjaarden in het algemeen? Wat zijn de meest opvallende verschillen tussen Nederlanders en Spanjaarden volgens u?

Wat mist u (vaak) bij Spanjaarden?

(Als hij specifiek eigenschappen van Spanjaarden noemt) Kunt u daar een voorbeeld van geven?

Standaard format voor critical incidents

Wat was de meest positieve ervaring die u had met Spanjaarden? Wat gebeurde er precies? Wat maakt dit voor u tot zo'n positieve ervaring?

Wat was de aanleiding voor die gebeurtenis?

Op welke manier droeg deze gebeurtenis bij aan een succesvolle samenwerking?

Hebt u nog meer van zulke voorbeelden?

Kunt u ook een minder prettige ervaring noemen die u had met Spanjaarden? Wat gebeurde er precies? Wat maakte dit voor u tot een onbevredigende ervaring?

Wat was de aanleiding voor die gebeurtenis?

Op welke manier belemmerde deze gebeurtenis de succesvolle samenwerking?

Hoe reageerde u?

Hoe is het afgelopen?

Waarom gedroeg de Spaanse collega zich op die manier, denkt u?

Hebt u nog meer van zulke voorbeelden?

Hebt u wel eens misverstanden tussen Spanjaarden en Nederlanders meegemaakt?

Hebt u wel eens meegemaakt dat u verrast werd door gedrag van Spanjaarden?

Hebt u wel eens meegemaakt dat u Spanjaarden niet begreep?

Hebt u wel eens meegemaakt dat u het oneens was met uw Spaanse collega?

Hebt u wel eens een conflict gehad met een Spaanse collega?

Hebt u wel eens andere problemen gehad met Spanjaarden?

Een goede leidinggevende: Hoe moet die zich gedragen? Verschillen Nederlanders en Spanjaarden daarin?

Een goede collega: Hoe moet die zich gedragen? Verschillen Nederlanders en Spanjaarden daarin?

Een goede werknemer: Hoe moet die zich gedragen? Verschillen Nederlanders en Spanjaarden daarin?

Hoe wordt er door de Spanjaarden omgegaan met procedures en de controle daarop?

Hoe gaat het besluitvormingsproces in het Spaanse bedrijf? Wie neemt de beslissingen en hoe gaat dat in zijn werk? Worden de besluiten door iedereen gerespecteerd?

Stelling: Het is makkelijker om samen te werken met een Nederlander dan met een Spanjaard.

Wat is uw mening en waardoor komt dat?

Wilt u nog meer vertellen over uw ervaringen met Spanjaarden? Hebben we alles besproken?

Appendix B – Catalogue with questions for the Spanish expert

Wat wordt er bedoeld met cortesia? En waarom wordt het gedaan? Waarom is op tijd komen niet zo belangrijk?

Sommige regels worden gevolgd maar anderen niet, is daar een specifieke reden voor? Wanneer volg je wel een regel en wanneer niet?

Waarom is fouten toegeven zo moeilijk?

Waarom komt dat temperamentvolle vandaan? Wat is het nut?

Waarom is er zo veel respect voor autoriteit, terwijl je dit in Nederland maar heel weinig ziet?

Waarom worden instructies blindelings opgevolgd en is er geen discussie mogelijk voor verbeteringen?

Waarom moet de baas alles controleren en doen medewerkers anders niks? Waarom voelen ze geen verantwoordelijkheid?

Waarom wordt initiatief door medewerkers naar de baas toe niet gewaardeerd?

Waarom is verandering zo eng?

Waarom hebben zo veel mensen moeilijkheden met instellingen?

Waarom blijven mensen zo lang op hun baan zonder promotie of andere verandering?

Geld wordt verdiend om te zorgen voor de familie. Het werk geeft verder weinig voldoening, geen interesse in persoonlijk groeien en promotie. Klopt dit?

Waarom is familie zo belangrijk voor Spanjaarden?

Waar komt die gulle gastvrijheid vandaan? Wat is de reden dat Spanjaarden dit doen?

Waarom vinden Nederlanders het moeilijk om vrienden te worden met Spanjaarden op een dieper level?

Spanjaarden werken extra lang, puur om de baas tevreden te houden, waarom?