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**Cultural differences experienced by the Dutch working
in the United Kingdom**

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Abstract

Nowadays, people are working and communicating more and more around the globalized world. With this increase, it can occur more often that a person from one culture can clash with a person from another culture. This is because, in cross-cultural communication, cultural differences may cause misunderstandings in communication that could potentially lead to clashes. Hence why, for doing business internationally, it gets more important to be aware of the differences in culture.

This research is part of the 'one market, many cultures' project and this study focuses on the British culture. This study aims to identify typical British behaviour which are named as British cultural standards in this research as perceived by the Dutch. Next to that, the additional aim is to find the cultural logic in the way of underlying values, behind the cultural standards. The cultural standards together with the cultural value to which one belongs form a thick description of the intercultural clashes between the Dutch and the British. This is done with the use of the following research question: *"In what situations do Dutch and British people experience problems/frictions in business communication and collaboration?"*

An inductive qualitative methodology is used to try to answer this question through semi-structured interviews. In total, sixteen Dutch participants have been interviewed with the use of the critical incident technique. This technique gave the interviewer information about in which situation the Dutch interviewee clashed with their British colleague in the working environment. After that, the so-called critical incidents have been coded and analysed with the use of the Thematic Analysis Method.

The data from the interviewees resulted in the finding of fourteen British Cultural standards. After a thorough identification of these standards, three underlying values were derived. These underlying values are Respect for 'Authority, Class, and Tradition', 'Respectability' and 'Competitiveness' which explain what the cultural logic behind the cultural standards are. These results provide Dutch ex-pats with a thick description of British culture from a Dutch point of view and can be used to improve intercultural (working) relationships between parties.

Keywords: Critical incidents, cultural standards, cultural logic, underlying values.

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1. Introduction

The Netherlands and the United Kingdom have long-standing business relations. Dating back to 1837 when the Netherlands and the United Kingdom signed the Treaty of Trade and Shipping (Weel, 2021). Since then, the free movement of people and goods between the two countries was allowed. The United Kingdom acceded to the European Economic Community on 1 January 1973 and withdrew from the European Union on 31 January 2020 (Valdhans, 2020) while The Netherlands is still part of the European Union. According to statistical data from the CBS (2022), in 2020 the Netherlands imported €20 033 million worth of goods from the UK and exported from the Netherlands to the UK €34 941 million worth of goods. According to Iskandarovna (2021), The Netherlands is in the top five most important trading partners for the United Kingdom. Vice versa, according to the official website of the Dutch government, The United Kingdom is also in the top five most important trading partners for the Netherlands (RVO Nederland, 2013). Besides the significant amount of imported and exported goods between the two countries, a fair number of employees live and work across the border. According to the CBS, over 46 thousand Brits lived in the Netherlands in 2016 (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2016b) and more than 73 thousand Dutch people lived in the United Kingdom in 2016 (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2016a).

According to Gerhards, (2007) significant cultural differences exist between European countries. Research into cultural differences within Europe is extremely valuable because it can help to improve trade relations between the constituent countries and thus boost trade within Europe. Especially now that Brexit may have large negative effects on trade flows between the EU and the UK (Campos & Timini, 2019).

Although the Netherlands and the UK are both geographically and mentally not very diverse from each other, there are some profound differences in mindset between the Dutch and British. Even though being major trading partners, the cooperation between different production locations and business associates does not go perfectly all the time, because of cultural differences, which can cause problems in communication and have a negative impact on productivity and profitability between business partners. However, the Dutch and the British have a lot in common culturally.

Most studies on cultural differences use Hofstede's quantitative model for dimensions of national cultural differences (Hofstede, 1991). For example, the study by Kidger et al. (2004) and the study by Heijltjes et al., (1996) in which it can be seen that both countries score low on "Power distance" and score high on "Individualism". The difference in the masculinity dimension between the Dutch and the British is quite significant, where the British has a more masculine society and the Dutch have a more feminine society. They also differ on the uncertainty avoidance dimension to a lesser extent, where

the Dutch tend to avoid uncertainty more than the British (Heijltjes et al., 1996). The study by Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (1994) also investigated cultural differences among western countries, including The Netherlands and The United Kingdom. In this study, a quantitative framework of seven dilemmas, which represents opposing values, is used to identify both cultures. This study shows differences in hierarchy, where the Dutch culture tends to be very egalitarian. Next to that, consensus is widely seen as a characteristic of Dutch decision making whereas this is much less in British culture, showing a similar result as found in studies using the Hofstede model. However, in quantitative studies like these, findings about British culture are described only generally, not providing clear instructions on how to act on the British work floor in everyday situations. Indeed, although studies with quantitative models like Hofstede's model for cultural dimensions and the Seven-dilemma framework by Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars show cultural differences between countries on a general level, Clausen (2010) mentioned that they are insufficient to fully describe cultural encounters. Therefore, these models cannot show differences in values and an in-depth description of both cultures. To describe the cultural encounters and values behind them, qualitative research can be used to dig deeper into cultural differences.

The study by Mellaard (2008) used a qualitative approach where prejudices and stereotypes of the Dutch and the British have been analysed with the use of interviews. However, this research was not able to find major differences between the Dutch and British cultures in communication and directness. Lawrence and Edwards (2000) conducted interviews and observational studies with businesspeople for their research on national cultural differences. Lawrence and Edwards (2000) stated that "conformity, restraint and equality" were the three major differences between the Dutch and the British. However, this conducted qualitative research into cultural differences between the Dutch and the British is quite impressionistic and shows little drivers behind the cultural differences between the Dutch and the British. To understand better the missing motivations for different behaviour in both cultures, an inductive, qualitative method is used in this research. The difference between this research and the previous research is that it does not only describe general cultural differences in the way of British cultural standards, but also the cultural logic behind these British standards which is not done before. Also, a unique part of this research comes from the part that this research describes cultural differences from a Dutch perspective, rather than general cultural differences.

This research follows the methodology by Thomas (2010) and has the aim to identify the situations in which the Dutch and the British experience problems on the work floor in communicating and cooperating with each other and to find out the cultural reasons behind these cultural frictions. In the methodology by Thomas (2010), the experienced problems come from cultural differences and are

identified as cultural standards and the cultural reasons behind these frictions are named underlying values. Additionally, this study tries to understand how both sides deal with these differences and the best ways to overcome them. This thesis contains a qualitative study of the cultural differences between the Dutch and British from a Dutch perspective by interviewing Dutchmen working in the UK. The result of this thesis should provide clues and solutions to improve communicative cooperation between the Dutch and the British to improve the productivity and profitability of the business relationships. This resulted in the following research question: *In what situations do Dutch and British people experience problems/frictions in business communication and collaboration?*

Based on the main research question, the following sub-questions are formulated:

1. What British cultural standards are experienced by Dutch expatriates?
2. What cultural logic has led to these British cultural standards?
3. Which coping mechanisms or interventions can be employed to overcome those problems/friction?

1.1 Academic relevance

This research contributes to our knowledge of cultural differences within Europe and to the understanding of how these differences arose by exploring cultural differences between the Dutch and the British through the application of a rigorous and robust qualitative research methodology proposed by Thomas (2010). This research also contributes to the identification of the cultural standards and values of the British through the use of this methodology.

1.2 Practical relevance

This thesis has also practical implications. Nowadays numerous businesses operate internationally, resulting in business connections all over the world. The results from this research can be of good use to Dutch businessmen, managers, and ex-pats working regularly with British colleagues since the results show the most important cultural differences between the Dutch and the British. When this Dutch workforce knows the most important differences they can take these into account to feel more welcome among British people because the Dutch then know how the British think and feel in certain situations. Vice versa, Dutch managers in the United Kingdom can with help of these results improve business relationships with British employees which can result in an increase in productivity. Dutch businessmen trading with the British can build relationships more easily when knowing the insights created with this thesis.

1.3 Outline of the study

This study has started with an introduction in which the research goal and research questions are stated. The objectives of this paper are also found in this first chapter. The second chapter presents the theoretical framework, which includes previous work on the topic, and shows how this paper aims to contribute to knowledge about cultural differences between the Dutch and the British. In the third chapter, the methodology used in this research is described. This chapter includes the research design, data collection, research instrument, data analysis, and feedback from experts. Then, the fourth chapter presents the results of this research. In the fifth chapter conclusions of this research are drawn to answer the research question and to reach the objective of this paper. Furthermore, the limitations of this research are discussed and suggestions for future research are given in this chapter.

2. Theoretical background

This chapter tries to define the concept of culture and provides the reader with previous research into cultural differences between the Dutch and the British. Additionally, cultural standards are defined based on literature and Dutch and British cultural values found in previous research are given.

2.1 Defining culture

Before going into previous research about intercultural differences, it is important to understand what the definition of the concept of 'culture' is. Thomas (2010) states that culture is a system of orientation that gives structure and sense to men's environment. 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 from the respective society, organization, or group (Thomas, 2010). The definition given by Enklaar does not differ a lot from the definition above. Enklaar (2007) defines culture as the set of values that a group adheres to. This is because of the consideration between different values, our concrete conception, and choices that arise.

For this research, both definitions of culture are important. Firstly, to find cultural differences for this study, in the interviews there is talked about *the specific symbols of the system of orientation* in order to see where the British have different behaviour than the Dutch. This helped in the identification of British cultural standards from a Dutch perspective. Secondly, this research also aimed to identify the cultural logic behind the difference in behaviour. This is done in the way of finding the underlying *set of values* of the British cultural standards.

2.2 Previous research into intercultural differences

In the field of international business and consultancy, the quantitative approach to intercultural differences is widely used around the world. These models use different dimensions for their cultural differences and have been very popular. A commonly used model is the model of Hofstede (2010). However, there are also other models like the model of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner and the model by Erin Meyer (INSEAD) which takes a qualitative approach in the study, based on interviews.

2.2.1 ETIC approaches

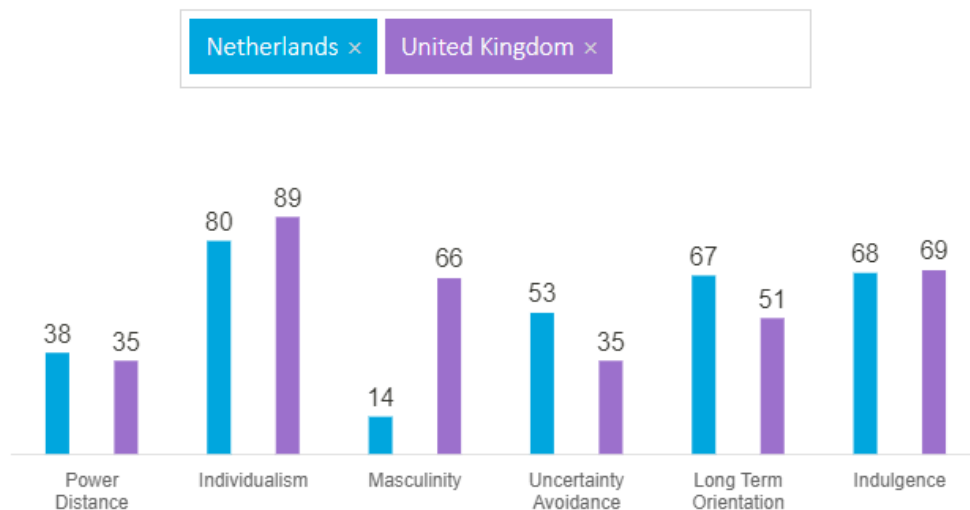
All the above mentioned models take an Etic Approach on culture. The etic approach demands a descriptive system that is equally valid for all cultures and which permits the representation of similarities as well as differences between individual cultures (Helfrich, 1999). The etic approach refers to research that studies cross-cultural differences (Fetvadjiev & van de Vijver, 2015).

2.2.1.1 Hofstede's model

In figure 1 the Hofstede model with its six dimensions is shown with the comparison between the United Kingdom and the Netherlands (Hofstede, 2022).

Figure 1

Hofstede's model for cultural differences: The United Kingdom and The Netherlands



Looking at these dimensions it can be seen that the society of the United Kingdom experiences small power distance, individualism, and indulgence. On these dimensions, both countries are close together. The biggest difference in these dimensions is that the British tend to be more masculine whereas the Dutch tend to be more feminine. A high score on masculinity indicates that the society will be driven by competition, achievement, and success, with success being defined by the winner/best in the field – a value system that starts in school and continues throughout organisational life (Hofstede insights, 2021). There are also some smaller differences in the Uncertainty Avoidance and Long-Term Orientation dimension. Here, the Dutch tend to be more avoidant of uncertainty and also are more long-term orientated than the British.

2.2.1.2 Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars

According to Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (1994), who researched seven countries including the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, the Dutch are more egalitarian and less hierarchical than the British. However, the biggest difference between the countries was found in the inner-direction/outer-direction dilemma. Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (1994) also state that the British tend to be more inner-directed and the Dutch tend to be more outer-directed. This means that for the British inner-directed judgments, decisions and commitments are the most important guides to action and

for the Dutch signals, demands, and trends in the outside world to which should be adjusted are the most important guides to action. Furthermore, Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (1994) mentioned that except for the previously mentioned dimensions, the Dutch do not differ a lot from Anglo-Saxon attitudes based on the seven dimensions by Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars.

2.2.1.3 Erin Meyer's model

According to the model by Meyer (2014), people from the Netherlands communicate with low-context, which means that good communication is precise, clear, and understood at face value. For people from the UK this is different, as they are located more toward the middle on the communication scale. This means that people from the UK communicate in less low-context than people from the Netherlands. On the dimension of giving feedback, there are also differences between the two countries. The Dutch tend to give negative feedback quite directly and honestly, whereas people from the UK do not give negative feedback so directly, but more softly. Another scale where both countries differ is the leading scale. The Dutch are more egalitarian, and their ideal distance between the boss and subordinates is low. In the UK, people tend to be less egalitarian and a bit more hierarchical. The same goes for the decision making process, where the Dutch tend to have consensual decision making and the British have a bit more of a top-down decision making process. Fewer differences between both countries can be seen on the persuading, trusting, and scheduling scale. However, when disagreeing, people from the Netherlands can be seen as more confrontational and people from the UK move a bit more towards avoiding confrontation.

2.2.1.4 Conclusion on Etic approaches

Clausen (2010) refers to cross-cultural management studies where the use of the above mentioned models (Hofstede, Trompenaars, and Hampden-Turner) as "generalization studies". These models with their cultural dimensions can be helpful for inspecting cultural differences between countries quickly, but do not provide business people or ex-pats with specific guidance on how to behave successfully in an environment with a foreign culture. According to Luring (2008), studies like this offer an approach that does not take into account how perceptions and work identities are formed and how they might change over time. Thus, these models do not provide clues on what the cultural logic behind the dimension of the models is. Hence why Fink et al. (2005) mentioned that in order to understand the dynamics behind international business encounters, a transition from comparative studies on cultural differences like Hofstede is needed to the study of intercultural interactions.

2.2.2 EMIC approaches

To overcome the limitations of the etic approach, the emic approach can be used. According to Helfrich (1999), for the emic approach, people's acts cannot be seen as distinct from their cultural context. They are determined not by *causes* which can be studied using the methods of the natural sciences but rather by *reasons* which are under the control of the acting person and must be understood through the eyes of the individuals under investigation (Helfrich, 1999). The emic approach refers to research that fully studies one culture with no (or only a secondary) cross-cultural focus (Fetvadjev & van de Vijver, 2015). All of the below mentioned studies have used the emic approach.

2.2.2.1 Two-sided cultural studies

Only little research into cultural differences between the Dutch and the British has been done without the use of one of the quantitative models. However, Mellaard (2008) used a qualitative approach in which stereotypes of both Dutch and British culture have been analysed with the use of interviews. This study however did not show major differences between the Dutch and British culture in communication and directness. Next to that, the study by Lawrence and Edwards (2000) used interviews and observational studies with businesspeople for their research on national cultural differences. In this research, it was found that the Dutch and British culture differs most on conformity, equality, and restraint. The Dutch want to reach conformity, where consensus is perceived as important in their decision making process. For the British, this is less the case and their managers are perceived as more adversarial. Next to that, the Dutch also tend to really focus on equality, whereas in British society there might be some hierarchy in organizations. Lawrence and Edwards (2000) also found that the Dutch are more sober and restrained and in British society, there is more room for individualism, ambition, and pride.

2.2.2.2 English cultural values

Another study that used an emic approach is the study by Tayeb (2015). This study is not cross-cultural but only studies one culture and therefore only contains English Cultural values. No already existing scientific research into British cultural values could be found. However, quantitative research into English characteristics is done, making up a big part of the British culture. In the study by Tayeb (2015), it is found that the values of individualism, deference, and acceptance of inequality, self-control and reserve, conservatism, xenophobia, honesty and trust, regard for liberty, and class consciousness were most significantly present in English culture. These English cultural organizationally-relevant values are explained below:

Individualism

Children from the middle class are seen as independent persons starting from a young age and they are pushed towards it by their parents. The parents let their children deal with their own matters, they only interfere in an indirect way, especially when the children reached puberty. Their children experience a lot of freedom in their life choices. However, according to Tayeb (2015), parents do indirectly discourage their children from getting involved with people from a lower class and from engaging in occupations that are perceived as undesirable from the norms of their class.

Life for the working-class child is harsher, on the whole than that of his/her middle-class counterpart. Attitudes are more authoritarian, the father is the head of the household and demands obedience from the child (Tayeb 2015).

Deference and Inequality

For the English, deference and obedience to seniors are strongly regarded as a virtue. Next to that, they also have a lot of respect for the people in power. However, being bossed around and being dictated is something that goes too far for them. There is a lot of respect for authority by the English when this authority is used correctly.

Self-control and Reserve

Tayeb (2015) states that the English people are quite disciplined, they have a lot of self-control and control their emotions. The English are not unemotional, however, they keep their emotions under the surface. The English do this because they value their privacy, not wanting to show their finer feelings when they are around other people.

Conservatism

According to Tayeb (2015), the English are known for their admiration for the past. They are traditional and conservative, also reluctant to change. For example, this can be seen in the preservation of old monuments and the attention for public ceremonies.

Xenophobia

The English are perceived as tolerant and friendly people who feel like they have a high public responsibility, believe in fair play, and are interested in different matters around a community.

However, according to Tayeb (2015), this does not extend to non-English people. Looking at England as part of Great Britain, its geographical placement, being an island, has sheltered them to an extent from invaders in its history. Having little influence from the outside resulted in the development of some xenophobic attitudes toward people who are not English.

Honesty and Trust

Tayeb (2015) perceives the English to be very honest and trusting. This could be seen in the following example that he mentioned: *"As a research student at Oxford in the mid-1970s, one of the things that struck me most at the Centre for Management Studies was the fact that students and fellows alike could use the photocopying machine as frequently as they wished without any control, counter key or supervision. All you had to do was to write down in a little book the number of the photocopies taken each time. I can think of many countries where this would be unthinkable!"* (Tayeb 2015, P. 53-54).

Liberty

According to Tayeb (2015), for the English, one of the most important rights is liberty, which over a long period has been protected by the English common law against the state. Nowadays, freedom of speech, act, and travel is deep-rooted in the English individual. Liberty is taken for granted, even though there are only a few legal guarantees for their freedom. The government can sometimes limit these individual liberty rights, resulting in a conflict where the individual often draws the short straw.

Class Consciousness

The English tend to value classes in their society as very important, where almost everyone one talks to could put themselves in a certain class. Family background, education, and even accent betray people's social class (Tayeb, 2015). The English classes consist of the upper class, which only a few people of the society are part of, the middle class, and the working class. However, there are different gradations within the classes and one is able to move between the classes. The values and attitudes of the English are dominated by those of the middle class because the middle class possesses the most positions of power and persuasion (Tayeb 2015).

2.2.2.3 English work to rule

In addition to the study by Tayeb (2015), the book by Fox (2014) is also used to get insight in English culture. Especially the chapter work to rule provided information about English behaviour codes at work. The most important subjects out of this chapter are mentioned below.

The muddle rules

Firstly, the English are serious about their jobs, however, they would not let this seriousness go too far. Secondly, they perceive their work as a duty, however, they do not perceive it as their 'sacred' duty. Thirdly, the English have a habit of moaning and complaining about their work, however, they also take a kind of stoical pride in 'getting on with it' and 'doing our best'.

Fourthly, the English indignantly censure people who do not work. Fifthly, English people often claim they prefer not to work, however, the social identity of the English is strongly linked to work. Sixthly, The English do not like to talk about money, and there is a prejudice towards 'trade' or 'business', which resulted in making the concept of 'doing business' a rather strange thing. Finally, they bring into the workplace all the familiar English rules of humour, embarrassment, inhibition, privacy, modesty, moaning, courtesy, and fairness. But despite all this, the English seem to muddle through (Fox, 2014).

The modesty rule

According to Fox (2014), the modesty rule forbids boastfulness and prescribes a modest attitude which are at odds with modern practises. The English can show enthusiasm for their products or services, but the anti-boasting and anti-earnestness rules mean that most of the English perceive it as inappropriate and find it embarrassing, therefore the English tend not to be very convincing (Fox, 2014).

The moderation rule

The English do most things in moderation, they do their work in a diligent way, and in their leisure time, the English have fun in a moderate way (Fox, 2014).

The fair-play rule

Fair-play implies that everyone should have equal opportunities and that no a single person should have an advantage that is not fair. Furthermore, the English people should act honourably, follow rules of a certain place, and take responsibilities (Fox, 2014).

The after-work drinks rules

According to Fox (2014), the English who go for drinks in the pub with their colleagues when they have finished working experience less stress than their counterparts. In the English culture, alcohol is a symbol for the transition from working to having fun. This is because the English associate alcohol with fun and relaxation. Pubs are places where there is a equal environment and status is much less important. The English associate drinking(places) with social bonding (Fox, 2014).

2.2.2.4 Dutch cultural values

Since there is no literature on Dutch cultural standards experienced by the British, Dutch cultural values are used to compare British culture with Dutch culture in this research. Enklaar (2007) states in his book that there are twelve different Dutch cultural values that explain the typical Dutch way of thinking and acting. These twelve cultural values are: salvation, guilt, charity, truth, labour, order and tidiness, usefulness, reliability, moderation, agreement, equality, and self-determination, and the pattern of thinking behind these Dutch values with their typical view is explained below. The study by Enklaar (2007) is also not cross-cultural but describes a culture on its own.

Salvation - *As long as we make the right choices a happy future awaits us.*

This value is about if we make good choices and act well, a good future awaits us. Now we may not be satisfied with everything in our lives, but if we do things the right way, we will get better and better. All problems can basically be solved by faith in progress, by faith that a better world is possible. Everything is open to be improved. Innovation leads to improvement and progress; stagnation is regression. If we always keep the ideal final goal in mind, direct all our actions toward it, and believe firmly in this ideal, it will automatically come within reach. It is good to sacrifice oneself for ideals.

Guilt - *You must acknowledge your guilt/responsibility for your mistakes/deeds.*

The cultural value of Guilt stands for that when a mistake has been made by someone, that person has to take responsibility for that. One who is guilty of an offense or violation has to be punished for that. Dutch people expect that that person confesses guilt and expresses regret. When that specific person promises not to perform the violation again, the Dutch regain its trust. Also, the person is less at fault if he or she could not have known or if the mistake was not intentional but accidental. Everyone is responsible for their actions and their consequences. You cannot run away from your responsibility but should acknowledge it. If mistakes were made under your responsibility, it is better to admit them than to hide them.

Charity – *What you do not want to be done to you, do not do that to another person.*

The cultural value of Charity in the Dutch culture is about when someone is in need of help or is suffering, we need to help them. All that is weak and helpless, we must support. It is a good thing to choose the side of the weak and the poor instead of the strong and the rich side. Do not do something to others that you wouldn't want to experience yourself. What you do to another today, a third party

may do to you tomorrow. It is better to think of others' interests than your own. It is unsympathetic to seek only your own benefit.

Truth – *You should always tell the truth, even if it is painful.*

This cultural value means that it is more appropriate to tell the truth openly and honestly than to keep things for yourself and get caught afterwards, otherwise, trust in a certain person is gone. Being honest and giving openness is better than beating around the bush and concealing painful things. Honesty is more important than politeness. Honesty is also better than presenting things more beautifully than they are. The Dutch don't want nice stories, they want to know how things really are. You have to stay down-to-earth, with both feet on the ground. The Dutch find it important to know the truth and to have certainty.

Labour – *Labour is good.*

This cultural value stands for the Dutch view on that doing work is good, and doing no work is not. It is seen as something positive when people work hard. Next to that, the work should be done correctly.

Order and tidiness - *You must have your things in neat order.*

This cultural value means that all Dutch people need order, neatness, and rules. If no one follows the rules, it becomes a mess and gets out of hand. We must live an orderly existence and have our things in order.

Usefulness – *Everything you do should provide something.*

This cultural value means that everything which is done needs to be useful and should provide something. We have to make demonstrable progress with this and get better from it, otherwise, it is wasteful. It's a waste not to take advantage of all the opportunities. We must be economical with our resources, especially with money.

Reliability – *You must keep your promises.*

The cultural value Reliability stands for that an agreement, once it is established, is fixed and that the agreement is not something non-committal. Once you promise something, you have to do it. Words and deeds must be consistent with each other. Those who do not keep their agreements are unreliable. You cannot depend on that.

Moderation – *You have to control yourself.*

This cultural value is about doing everything in moderation, otherwise, it will go wrong, and overdoing is harmful. Control yourself, don't overdo it, and have patience. Acting uncontrollably is perceived as immature and shows that you have no control over yourself.

Agreement - *You have to work it out together.*

The Dutch try to resolve differences peacefully. Things should not get out of hand. Aggression and violence are out of the question and must be prevented. Therefore, we should not offend and provoke each other. Instead, it is good to consult with each other, let each have their say, and come to an agreement together. Instead of one side getting it right, it is better for peace that we all give in a little and come to a compromise. We must maintain a pleasant atmosphere without hostility: it must remain friendly.

Equality - *You should not think that you are better than someone else.*

This cultural value stands for that the Dutch think that inequality is unjust. Everyone should be treated equally. You should not put one ahead of another. You must not give others the impression that you consider yourself better than someone else and that someone else is less than you. It is not a good thing to look down on someone else.

Self-determination - *Everyone has to decide for themselves what to do, as long as they are not bothering anyone else.*

The Dutch cultural value of Self-determination means that a person should be able to do as he/she wants, without anyone else getting involved. You should make your own choices and have your own opinion. Another person has no right to tell you or force you on what to do. No one should think he can boss others around.

2.2.2.5 Conclusion on Emic approaches

The study by Tayeb (2015) adds up to the usage of quantitative models like Hofstede, but still, this does not reveal the cultural logic behind the behaviour of the British. Even though the other mentioned studies which used the emic approach used a qualitative method to research cultural differences, these are quite impressionistic and also showed little to no drivers behind the cultural differences between the Dutch and the British. To overcome these problems, the methodology by Thomas is used in this research which provides a good empirical basis in the way of cultural standards. However, the

approach by Thomas (2010) still lacks giving insight into the motives of a cultural group. Hence, a “thick description” in the way of Geertz (1973) is needed. Geertz (1973) states that there is little profit for theory building in codifying abstract regularities, to get more theory building, one should make the description of cultural interaction as thick as possible. This so-called thick description shows the cultural logic (values) behind the typical British behaviour in the way of British cultural standards.

2.3 Defining cultural standards and cultural values

For establishing a countries cultural standards Thomas (2010) states that someone can ask people from other countries what particularly strikes them about their encounters with people from a particular country and what difficulties they repeatedly encounter. For example, do they find it difficult to understand their behaviour and reactions in certain circumstances, and what factors seem to contribute to a complicated interaction? The information obtained from these critical interactions lends itself to cross-country comparisons and can be evaluated and analysed in terms of cause and effect in such difficult situations (Thomas, 2010). The outcomes indicate a high consensus on the set of behavioural indicators, which are defined as cultural standards (Thomas, 2010).

Cultural standards can be defined based on the following five indicators (Thomas, 2010):

- Cultural standards are forms of perception, thought patterns, judgment, and interaction that are shared by a majority of the members of a specific culture who regard their behaviour as normal, typical, and binding.
- Own and other unfamiliar behaviour is directed, regulated, and judged on the basis of this cultural standard.
- Cultural standards provide a regulatory function for mastering a given situation and dealing with people.
- The individual and group-specific way of applying cultural standards to adjust behaviour can fluctuate within a range of tolerance.
- Forms of behaviour that exceed this specific range are not accepted or sanctioned by the respective collective.

According to Enklaar (2007), cultural values are general moral principles that are deeply embedded in our culture and learned from an early age. A culture is a compilation of values cherished by the group we belong to. Hence, the values of a certain culture are called cultural values. The members of the group (culture) use the same cultural logic, reasoning, and arguments based on the group's values.

3. Methodology

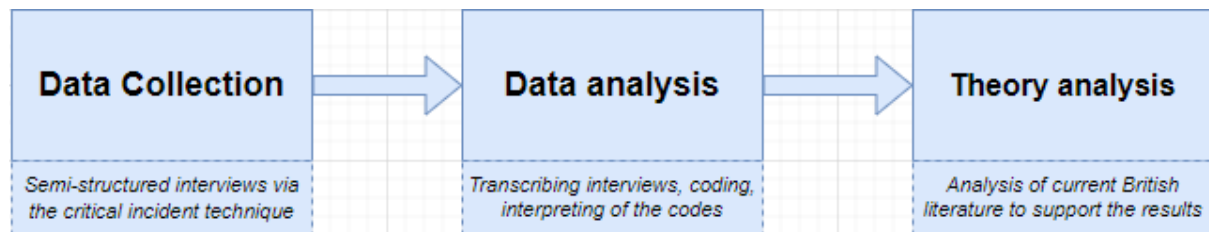
This chapter contains an explanation of the used research method for this research. Additionally, this chapter also explains other considerations in regard to the used methods. Next to that, an insight in the demographics of the interviewees is also shown in this chapter.

3.1 Research design

This research describes concrete situations between the Dutch and British when they experience issues on the work floor in communication and collaboration, due to cultural differences, what these cultural differences consist of, and offer managers and consultants concrete clues on how they can be bridged. For this study, an inductive qualitative approach is used, since qualitative research studies participants' meanings and the relationships between them, using a variety of data collection techniques and analytical procedures, to develop a conceptual framework and theoretical contribution (Saunders et al., 2012). This allows us to interpret the situations mentioned by the interviewees in order to find British. The research design outlines the methodology which is followed in this research to establish cultural standards. An overview of the research design can be seen in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2

Visualization of the research design



3.2 Data collection

The interviewees have been contacted through social media platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn. Several existing groups have been consulted about Dutch people working in the UK in order to find sixteen interviewees. The interviewees have been selected by the variety of their demographic data like in which region the interviewee is working, the age of that person, and what their gender is. For the interviewees it was required to have a minimum of 6 months of experience working as an ex-pat in the United Kingdom. This is because according to Bhuwak (1998), after the first months in a new country, the person needs to work with a great effort toward cultural integration. This is also why preference has been given to interviewees who has been working as an ex-pat in the United Kingdom for the longest duration since the longer a person is in the country, the more efforts had to be made for cultural integration.

3.2.1 Demographic description of the sample

Sixteen Dutch people working and living in the UK participated in the study as interviewees. In table 1 the characteristics of the interviewees can be found.

Table 1

Demographic overview of the interviewees.

Interviewee no.	Gender	Age	Years working in the UK	Location	Manager/supervisor
1	M	26	2,5	Edinburgh	No
2	M	39	13	Aberdeen	Yes
3	M	33	1,5	London	No
4	M	48	15	London	No
5	F	32	8	Exeter	No
6	F	58	24	London / Birmingham	Yes
7	M	32	1,5	London	Yes
8	F	28	6	London	No
9	F	52	4	London	Yes
10	F	34	7	Newcastle	No
11	F	29	1,75	London	No
12	F	37	3	London	Yes
13	M	49	25	Bristol	Yes
14	F	41	16	Edinburgh	No
15	M	51	7	London	No
16	M	59	5	Stevenage	Yes

3.3 Research instruments

Data for this research has been collected through semi-structured interviews with Dutchmen participating in the study. The advantage of semi-structured interviews is that it provides the opportunity to 'probe' answers, where it is needed for interviewees to explain, or build on, their responses. This is important when adopting an interpretivist epistemology, where the interviewer wants to understand the meanings that participants ascribe to various phenomena (Saunders et al., 2009). However, the interviewer needs to be aware that the manner in which is interacted with the interviewees and the asked questions will impact the data you collect (Silverman 2006). This is because, according to Adams (2015), the quality of the data is related to the interviewing abilities of the interviewer by asking the right questions at the right moment to gain more in-depth information.

In this research, purposive sampling is used, which is also called judgemental sampling. According to Saunders et al. (2012), with purposive sampling, the researcher needs to use their own judgement to select cases that can provide the most information about the research question. Sixteen interviewees have been selected for this study, since Guest et al. (2006) found in their analysis that data saturation occurred by the time they had analysed twelve interviews. The interviews have been conducted with one individual at the time via a video call because the interviewees were at the time all based in the UK, while the interviewer was based in the Netherlands. The interviews were held in the native language of both the interviewer and the interviewee, which in this case is Dutch. The reason for choosing Dutch is that the interview takes place between two Dutch people, and when communicating in your native language makes it easier to communicate, explain and express feelings about certain situations/experiences. The interviews included questions about experiences Dutch ex-pats encountered in communicating and collaborating with the British. The interviewees have also been asked to come up with examples (critical incidents) where situations went differently from what they as Dutch people are used to. The interviews lasted between 50 to 90 minutes and have been transcribed verbatim by the use of Amberscript.

According to Yilmaz (2013), qualitative research is so fundamentally different from quantitative research, and it should be judged on its own terms. The basic criterion to judge the credibility of qualitative data is the extent to which they allow the reader to enter the situation or setting under study. In other words, a rich and detailed description of the setting and participants is a must (Yilmaz 2013). In line with the above, in this study, the critical incident technique (Thomas, 2010) is used to determine the British cultural standards perceived by the Dutch. In his work, Thomas (2010) combined narratives with a rigorous methodology, which makes his research potentially replicable and able to provide a '*thick*' description of the cultural standards of British people, as perceived by the Dutch.

3.4 Data analysis

The interviews have been analysed via Thematic Analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is not bound to a pre-existing framework, and therefore it is used to have theoretical freedom. This research used the model from Gioia et al. (2012) with the 1st order concepts, 2nd order themes, and aggregate dimensions to structure the data. Thematic Analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic Analysis consists of six phases for analysing and coding a dataset. These steps organize and describe the data set in rich detail. In the first phase, the researcher familiarizes themselves with the data by transcribing and re-reading the results. In the second phase, initial codes are generated by coding interesting features of the dataset and connecting related data to a specific code. This can be perceived as the

first order concept in Gioia et al. (2012). The first order concepts consist of quotes from the interviewees in this research. In the third phase, the researcher searches for themes by collating codes into potential themes and gathering all relevant data for each potential theme. This phase is similar to what is done for the second themes in Gioia et al. (2012). In the fourth phase, the themes are checked if they work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set. The fifth phase is defining and naming themes, which includes an ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of the themes and generate clear names for each theme. The sixth phase is producing the report which is done by the selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, a final analysis of the selected extracts, relating back to the analysis of the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Applying Thematic Analysis to this research, first, the interviews have been transcribed and re-read (step 1 in thematic analysis). Second, critical incidents have been analysed and categorized by open coding according to the specific topics they refer to (step 2 in thematic analyses). Then, the subjects have been attributed to a more limited set of cultural standards (step 3 in thematic analysis). The cultural standards have been checked if they work with the quotes (step 4 in thematic analysis) and are seen as typical behaviours of the British. This resulted in clearly defined cultural standards (step 5 in thematic analysis). After categorisation and identification of the cultural standards, the cultural logic behind the cultural standards has been looked for by using clues from the interviews and consulting relevant studies. This resulted in a clear description of the cultural standards where the Dutch and the British differ. The results show the sensitive points in interaction and a catalogue of specific situations which illustrate cultural frictions. The identified cultural standards and the cultural logic behind them have been worked out in this research (step 6 in thematic analysis) and have been presented to a number of experts in the field of cultural differences between the two countries in question, to check for potential errors and misunderstandings.

As mentioned earlier, the data for this research was structured with the help of the 1st order concepts, 2nd order themes, and aggregate dimensions of Gioia et al. (2012). Where in this research, the 1st order concepts are the quotes from the interviewees, the second order themes are the cultural standards and the aggregate dimensions are the cultural logic (value) behind British behaviour.

3.5 Feedback from experts

The results of this research were presented to experts on British culture. In this case Dr. L. Carminati was the main expert to which the results have been showed. She can be considered an expert because

she has lived in the United Kingdom for several years. When Dr. Carminati was in doubt of some of the results she consulted two native Brits who grew up in the United Kingdom. These people can also be considered as experts since they grew up within the British culture. The feedback from the experts was used to improve the quality of the results and to remove mistakes and adjust misinterpretation. This study was also presented to an expert in the field of cultural differences which is Dr. A.H. Enklaar. Overall, the feedback from above mentioned people improved the reliability of the research.

4. Results

This chapter contains the results of the research into the intercultural differences between the Dutch and the British. To start, the typical British cultural standards are shown with a definition and how many interviewees mentioned the cultural standard. After that, the cultural standards are categorized under cultural values in order to find the cultural logic behind these standards.

4.1 British cultural standards

Out of the sixteen interviews, fourteen cultural standards have been identified and can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2

Overview of the British cultural standards perceived by the Dutch

Cultural standards	Definitions	Number of interviewees mentioned the cultural standard
Indirect communication	People do not share their honest opinion about things, asking questions to express doubts in a subtle indirect way.	16
Decision	Decisions are made by the boss, with little to no input from the subordinates (Decisions are not challenged by the employees).	15
Closedness	Conversations remain purely businesslike; great importance is attached to private life.	13
Evasive	Painful situations and embarrassment are avoided by not engaging in confrontations. Problems remain present under the surface.	12
Responsibility	The boss takes full responsibility and gives instructions to the workforce, employees show little to no initiative.	11
Performance focus	Highly focused on targets and attributing them to individuals.	11
Emotionally inexpressive	No room to show emotions on the work floor, people show a "stiff upper lip".	7

Work-life balance	During weekdays the focus is mainly on working, with long hours a day. Leisure time comes on weekends.	7
Control	The boss controls the workforce.	6
Status focus	People are classified according to their social positions and are proud of their achievements.	6
Socialising	Social working relationships are built during activities outside of working hours.	6
Leadership	The boss is clearly the boss. Employees behave differently towards people with a higher rank in the organization, their authority is respected.	5
Flexibility	Decision making process takes longer, people do not immediately start working on things discussed in meetings, but try to find better solutions.	4
Conservatism	Sticking to common traditions and practices, not changing things that work well.	3

The section below contains the descriptions of the British cultural standards perceived by the Dutch in more detail. To begin with, a description of the British cultural standard is given. After that, some quotes from the interviews about the cultural standard are given. At last, it is explained why the British cultural standards may conflict with the Dutch cultural standards.

Indirect communication

For the British people, the use of indirect communication is very common, being mentioned in all sixteen interviews. Usually, Brits do not share their honest opinions about things when they are in the working environment. When they do not agree, doubts are expressed in a subtle indirect way. This is done because saying things directly to another detracts from a person's politeness.

Quote 1:

"It's often some things and the way they(the British) say things, so what they say is for example; maybe later, but then they actually mean no. So I think, that's going to happen some other

time, but then it isn't. So if someone says, well, I don't think this is a very good idea, that's just actually hard no (Interviewee 14)."

Quote 2:

"For example, I once asked someone if he needed help for a small thing, and that was after five o'clock and he was British. He asked about that and then I said: that's fine by me, I'd be happy to help. And later when it was time he said: oh, thank you, or something like that. And then I had to think, but apparently thank you means: you don't have to do it anymore. But I thought, thank you, like yes, please. I was waiting for a description of: What can I do for you? (Interviewee 11)."

One of the most occurring clashes between the Dutch and the British on the work floor comes from the difference in communication style. The Dutch tend to have a more direct communication style, saying things the way they are, literally speaking out what they think or what they think is true. While the British talk more in an indirect way in order to stay polite. The interviewees mentioned that the directness of the Dutch sometimes is perceived as rude by the British. Vice versa, the interviewees also mentioned that the indirect communication style of the British sometimes left them stunned, not knowing what their British counterpart meant as can be seen in the second quote. In this instance, the British cultural standard 'Indirect communication' may clash with the Dutch cultural value 'Truth'.

Decision

In the British working environment often the decision making process moves up on different hierarchical layers, before reaching the boss. However, decisions are usually made by the boss with little to no input from the subordinates. Employees with the same rank in the organization could talk about what they think of the decision, however, the decisions made are not openly criticized towards the higher ranked persons in the company.

Quote 3:

"Well, we were setting up a new business back then and I think in retrospect, looking back on it now, the idea was that we would want to set up that business here with our team. But his (the manager) idea was to have that done somewhere else, whereas, for us, it was a good new revenue stream that we would actually have liked to do ourselves. But in his (the manager) mind, he had probably already given it away without consulting with us (Interviewee 4)."

Quote 4:

"The manager always takes the decisions, it depends of course. If I had been in the manager position, I could have said: yes, I can make the decisions, but I am not in the manager position, so for me, it is always the person higher up who makes the decisions (manager), and those decisions are also overseen by the person higher up from the manager position (interviewee 5)."

As can be seen in quote 3, the interviewee had expected the manager to consult with his staff about the new business. Instead, he had already chosen by himself to give the new business away, while his staff thought it was better to keep it themselves. Also, another interviewee said: *"Sometimes the management decides to restructure the company, and I then think here we go again. They did not consult anyone about it"*. In this case, the British cultural standard 'Decision' where the manager makes the decisions in a company, with little listening to the staff clashes with the Dutch cultural value of 'agreement' which stands for the principle that you have to work things out together with your subordinates.

Closedness

Most of the Dutch interviewees experienced their British colleagues to be very reserved during working hours, finding it difficult to reach conversations on a personal level. Conversations on the work floor seem to remain purely business-like as great importance is attached to private life. The Brits are focused on the tasks they are doing, which leaves little to no room for sociability. Behaviour towards people with whom Brits do not have a close relationship is distant. They see their working environment just as a place to work, not for building social relationships.

Quote 5:

"I ran into that at the beginning: What is common or not to share in the workplace? For example, how was your weekend, do you go into that in great detail or should you hold back until a few more questions are asked, and only then can you open up about how was your weekend? Because it's often a politeness question. Brits are more for form, more of "how's it supposed to be" than the Dutch. I feel like in the Netherlands if someone asks how was your weekend, that can also be a formality, but there I have a better idea of what it is (interviewee 7)."

Quote 6:

"Brits are not very open in general. I do enjoy talking about what I've done or what I've experienced, but a lot of people really come into work and it's funny then how closed they are when you see how much time they waste at the coffee machine. But it's very much about this and that and not so much about personal life. For example, I went to the movies or my child is sick, you don't hear that it's very much about this and that culture (interviewee 15)."

Dutch people tend to be much more open about their private lives on the work floor. It is common to talk about your family, friends, and what activities you did on the weekend. For Dutch people talking about private life creates an informal work setting which improves the relationship with other colleagues and results in working better together. As can be seen in the quotes above, the Brits find this very odd. For them, their privacy is very important for them. Brits maintain a strict separation between work and their private life, they do not find it the place to build social relationships. This sometimes made the Dutch ex-pats working in the UK amazed since they could tell a whole big story about their private life, while not getting much back from the Brits.

Evasive

Brits try to avoid painful situations by not engaging in confrontations. By avoiding these confrontations problems can remain present under the surface. The British do not want to harm anyone and try to remain polite in these situations because this can otherwise cause embarrassment which is the biggest fear of the British. The quotes below show typical quotes related to this cultural standard.

Quote 7:

"In the Netherlands, you might say to a customer, well, I quite understand that you ask that, but that's just not reasonable, what you are expecting from me right now. But there (in the UK) they said: yes, I'll check with my manager, I'll check with my boss, because then, even if they're not going to discuss it at all with the manager or Boss, they themselves don't take that responsibility for a disappointed customer or an angry customer (interviewee 9)."

Quote 8:

"I worked on that new system, I want to continuously improve things. So for example, I think data and the system are very important. And if you can't rely on data, then it's just of no use really. So I try to address things like that. But that is not taken up or not listened to, and then they complain to

my manager, but speaking to me directly is not done. So then you get a strange situation, there is actually something going on, but it is passed on to a manager, who doesn't know the situation. So generally, nothing is talked out at all, they approach my manager, saying they have problems, but I don't receive any feedback from my manager to solve things either (interviewee 16)."

In the Netherlands, it is much more common to openly express criticism or say that you disagree with something in a friendly way. This is because of the Dutch cultural value of 'Truth'. Dutch people want to tell the truth, even if it is painful. They think that depicting cases more beautifully than they are causes confusion for others since they want to know how things really are. Dutch people value speaking the truth more than being polite. The opposite seems true for the British. They rather do not want to offend anyone, thus resulting in not speaking the truth when things are not going well. Giving negative feedback is avoided and tensions remain present just under the surface. These tensions are built up and very occasionally they erupt, leaving the Dutch astonished because they had not realized that things were not going well. However, most of the time the British do not even speak it out.

Responsibility

The Dutch interviewees experienced that the distribution of responsibility on the work floor is much different in the United Kingdom. In the UK it is common for the boss to take full responsibility for work delivered by the employees and the overall performance of the company. The bosses give instructions to the workforce, which results in that the employees show little to no initiative in their daily actions on the work floor.

Quote 9:

"Most of my colleagues are like okay, no actually I don't agree, but still, if my boss proposes something they won't give a hard no on that, they would be like, okay, that is good, we will do it, but on your responsibility (interviewee 1)."

Quote 10:

"I notice that Dutch people never use the word boss. That person is my boss, so I do what he says or what she says, and in England that is very normal. No, he is the boss, he tells me to do this and I do that without asking why. That is another important difference I have noticed. I always ask regardless of how high up in the tree he is, why are we doing this? And if I think it is not necessary, I

will always say why I think it is not necessary. And if I think it should be done differently, I will also say that. And then if that person still says no, we have chosen to do this, and if this is fine, we will go for it. But that is another important difference. I see that English people actually never give rebuttals to orders they are given, so it comes here, this has to be done, no questions asked. We are just going to do this and often the assignment is not understood and there is certainly no asking back why we are actually doing it (Interviewee 3)."

This British cultural standard of 'Responsibility' clashes with the Dutch cultural value of 'Self-determination' which stands means that Dutch people should make their own choices and have their own opinion. Interviewee 3 mentioned: *"I always ask, regardless of how high up in the three he is, why are we doing this?"*. This indicates that the Dutch interviewee wants to be responsible for the things he does, with checking if it is necessary to do. The Dutch interviewees mentioned very often that this is not done by their British counterparts.

Performance focus

For the British workforce, it is common to work more hours than contracted for, in order to reach the challenging targets of the company you work for. They are highly focused on these targets and these targets are attributed to individuals. Working a lot of hours is the way to make your career, people are challenged because there can be certain incentives for achieving targets. The quotes below show typical quotes related to this cultural standard.

Quote 11:

"On the one side, you are expected: to work the normal hours. On the other hand, you have to meet your targets and what can't be done during normal hours. So you always have to do a lot of work actually, but you can't do that in normal hours. So then you get an atmosphere that people also work evenings, work weekends, and then you get an uneven assessment. Because if you do not do that, you do not function (Interviewee 16)."

Quote 12:

"So my husband also works for a big British company, for three years now. People literally go overboard for their bonus, which we in the Netherlands really can't imagine, so to speak, and my husband, who is also Dutch, also really can't imagine it (Interviewee 12)."

Looking at the Dutch cultural value of 'Labour' it is not expected that a British cultural standard 'Performance focus' is perceived by the Dutch as a cultural difference, however, there is a difference. According to Enklaar (2007), the Dutch see working as a good thing to do and it shows what a person is capable of, it is a source of pride and status. Working more hours can also occur in the Netherlands, however, some interviewees experienced that in the United Kingdom this case can be more extreme. For example, in quote 11 it can be seen that working targets cannot be met within normal hours and therefore people need to work outside of the normal contracted hours. Interviewee 16 mentioned: *"You don't function"* if you do not meet the targets. In the Netherlands, people are less judged on this. Next to that, as can be seen in quote 12, Dutch people cannot imagine that people in the UK literally go overboard for their bonuses. The Dutch do this much less because they have much more need for leisure time. Hence why performance focus clashes with the Dutch 'Self-determination', this is because the Dutch want more private decisions and room for private life.

Emotionally inexpressive

In the British working environment, there tends to be no room to show emotions. Personal problems are not talked about and the emotions around these situations are pushed aside. People tend to avoid upsetting someone and showing your emotions is perceived as a weakness. The working environment should look as professional as possible, with people showing a "stiff upper lip" which means not showing emotions. Showing emotions detracts from the professionalism of the company.

Quote 13:

"You ask someone's opinion and it is always everything is fine, always everything is not a problem. But if it were a problem, they would actually have to say so. And then you don't hear from them again. You get a message two hours in advance to say: sorry I am not feeling very well and that's really British the whole politeness, please don't upset anyone. And I find that very difficult sometimes (interviewee 6)."

Quote 14:

"In the early years, I worked with a Dutchman offshore on one of the platforms or on the boats. There were several instances where a decision was taken not to continue work, for example, because there was more other important work that needed to be completed first. Or that we got reprimanded because something didn't go quite right for example and I noticed, I took that maybe a little bit personally as well, but I've learned to put that aside them a bit more over the years. But he as a 40-plus

guy, took things personally and didn't know how to place that so well, often reacted a little bit, not really emotionally, but there was some emotion in his answers, and his decisions, his emails there was some emotion in them and they(the British) were really making jokes about that (interviewee 2)."

In the British working environment, it is very uncommon to show how you really feel, showing emotions is withheld. As can be seen in quote 14, showing emotions is not respected. For the Dutch, this can be considered very odd because their cultural value of 'Truth' conflicts with not showing how you really feel since the Dutch are used to showing their feelings to their colleagues in a controlled manner. Being genuinely concerned with the feelings of colleagues is really valued and makes the relationship between colleagues better. For the Dutch, this improves the whole process of work while the British find this unprofessional. However, according to Enklaar (2007), the Dutch have a cultural value called 'Moderation' which stands for that emotions should not be shown too vehemently, otherwise the Dutch consider it excessive or uncivilized.

Work-life balance

In relation to the British cultural standard 'Performance focus' comes the cultural standard 'Work-life balance'. However, this cultural standard is mentioned by interviewees to be about mentality in work-life balance, where for performance focus working a lot of hours is needed for performing well. For Brits, the work-life balance refers to the balance between the weekdays and the weekend: during the weekdays the focus is mainly on work with long hours a day. Leisure time comes mainly on the weekends, and not necessarily in the hours after work in the evening.

Quote 15:

"I think that certainly in London, there are so many (inter-)national workers that come here, often young, without family, without friends who come here to work and have all the time available to work and can therefore be formed fairly easily into the perfect employee, who is there for you, 24/7 for the company, so a lot of energy is put into making the ex-pat's experience as pleasant as possible. But I know I think that's more self-interest of the company than actually being so nice there now (Interviewee 8)."

Quote 16:

"I feel that Work-Life balance is just a lot less important here, and the correlation between the number of working hours and your mental health hasn't quite caught on here either. I feel like that's a

lot better in the Netherlands, and on top of that, mental health care is super bad in the UK. So should you have mental problems, you can hardly manage that through the NHS. But I'm very conscious myself that when I apply to a company that I know what the terms of employment are, and that I stand behind them (Interviewee 10)."

Working extra hours is not uncommon in the Netherlands, especially in functions higher up the hierarchy. In fact, the Dutch cultural value of 'Labour' even describes that the Dutch perceive work as a good thing to do and that working hard gives status to a person. However, a reason why the Dutch people perceive the British work-life balance as different from the Dutch work-life balance may come from the Dutch cultural value of 'Self-determination'. This value means that one must decide for themselves what to do (after work) and that free time is having the freedom to organise your own life and engage in other activities you consider important. The Dutch expect to have some leisure time after working hours during weekdays, while it is common for Brits to come home late from work and not have a lot of leisure time in the evenings. An interviewee mentioned about the Brits, especially in London: *"The focus on the leisure time lies very much on the weekends"*. Indicating the difference in the take on the work-life balance between the Dutch and the British.

Socialising

This British cultural standard is related to the earlier mentioned cultural standard 'Closedness'. Since people tend not to be very open on the work floor and have a strict separation of work and private life, the social working relationships are built during activities outside of working hours, during lunch, going to the pub, or other non-work activities with colleagues. Also, Fox (2014) mentioned in her book about the English: both drinking and drinking places are universally associated with social bonding.

Quote 17:

"You come into the office, you say: hey, how are you? You go to work, sometimes you have a moment to yourself, let's say with the headphones on that's the same as in the Netherlands. Here it is the case that that is a little less with us because we are in the NGO sector, but if I look at the other start-ups around us, which are more for-profit, there is a culture of after work we go straight to the pub for a meal or a beer and a beer is a pint here in the UK. That's really in British culture though, the social part doesn't happen in the workplace, it happens outside of working hours. And in the Netherlands, I had more of an idea that the social part also happens on the work floor (Interviewee 7)."

Quote 18:

“Look, I have good friends here, but that's all a bit more superficial. I think in the Netherlands, from what I remember when I worked in the Netherlands, you often have really close ties with colleagues as well. And here that all has to be organised, sometimes from after work to the pub because everything revolves around the pub in England if you want to do something. But that doesn't happen in people's homes either (Interviewee 6).”

As a result of the British closedness in the working environment, their socialising with colleagues happens outside of working hours, e.g. during extensive lunches or going to the pub. As stated in quote 17: *“The social part does not happen in the workplace, it happens outside of working hours”*. The Dutch experience that the British want to keep it professional in the workplace, while the Dutch themselves like having social contacts during working hours. The more extreme clash between the Dutch and the British however occurs in pubs. As one interviewee mentioned: *“What's very funny and that's really very British, and that totally comes back to you. People in the highest positions are getting stupidly drunk and cannot get out of the pub, have to get dragged out, and put in a cab. They really can't do anything anymore. And the next day at the office you just pretend nothing is wrong”*. Multiple Dutch interviewees mentioned that they found it strange that normally, on the work floor, the British try to stay as professional as possible, and in the pub, they can go all out. For the British pub-talk is relaxed, informal, friendly talk, not trying to impress, and not taking things too seriously (Fox, 2014).

Status focus

For Brits, status plays an important role in the working environment, since people are continually classifying each other according to their social positions. British people are proud of their achievements, however, they will always describe them with an understatement, and boasting about the achievement is not done. Performing well promotes a person's prestige and status.

Quote 19:

“In finance, they look very much at which university you come from. It also has to do with what background you have, so what class you are in here. That's also how they behave in the office. So, for someone who comes from a lower class, you act more haughtily towards them and that is in everything, in shops, on the street and that class society is in literally everything. It's in communication, so the more polite you talk, the higher the class you are in. To verbiage, to that people in certain classes always get jobs very easily (Interviewee 12).”

Quote 20:

"I find the British much more class-oriented than the Dutch. What I see around me, and I then notice that with introductions. The British then ask: Who do I have in front of me? Where did you study? How is the university ranked? So it's immediately: where do I rate you on the social hierarchy? That's how I notice how the British interact with each other (Interviewee 7)."

As can be seen in quote 19, things like which university someone went to, which grades they got, and what background they have is very important. These things divide people into different status classes. Another interviewee said: *"People with high degrees are often addressed by the title and then the last name, while other people are just addressed by their first name"*. It is not the case that getting your degree is less important in the Netherlands, however, which university it is and which grades you got are less important, as long as you have got your degree. The British cultural standard 'Status focus' clashes with the Dutch culture value of 'Equality'. This Dutch value means that one should not think that he or she is better than anyone else. The British cultural standard clashes with the Dutch value because in the United Kingdom, people are ranked into different classes, where people with a higher status than others are looked up to. While in the Netherlands, people are perceived as equal and are not divided into different status classes.

Control

As a follow-up to the previously mentioned British cultural standard 'Responsibility', this cultural standard occurs. The boss wants to see what the workforce is doing, checking and controlling if they are doing their job in the right way.

Quote 21:

" You see that in England all these open plans, people think that's cosy because otherwise, you have to go from office to office. But here people work in open plan offices and that is purely for reasons of control to keep an eye on everything. And the argument is that you know what you are doing. But of course, that is not the case, you know that yourself when you are somewhere you focus on your own things (Interviewee 9)."

Quote 22:

"My boss was extremely precise and a bit of a micromanager, so I didn't feel like I was doing a good job, because he wanted to look over my shoulder at everything, which made me feel that I wasn't doing a good job (Interviewee 10)."

In the British working environment, it often occurs that the boss wants to keep control over the workforce. This is done by easily controllable offices to just checking the work that employees do. This conflicts with the Dutch cultural value of 'Self-determination'. In the Netherlands, the bosses do not necessarily want to control their workforce. The bosses want to build up trust between them and the employees. When good work is delivered by the employees, there is less need to control what they are doing. The Dutch would perceive constant control as untrustful and would feel underqualified.

Leadership

In the British working environment, it is clearly visible who the boss is. British employees act differently towards people who have a higher ranking in the organization. The people with a higher ranking in the organization want their leadership to be recognized by people with a lower rank and do not behave like they are equal to the lower-ranked people in the organization. The authority of the people with more power is respected. The quotes below show typical quotes related to this cultural standard.

Quote 23:

" It depends a little bit. In general, I always had very good relationships with my bosses, so I was able to talk very freely and openly with them and also, in a certain way, to be critical because I also had a management position. But there are also cases where people are very careful when talking to their boss and take a very cautious approach (interviewee 13)."

Quote 24:

This interviewee skipped a three-hour meeting with the boss because the interviewee really needed to help some customers and thought that this was more important than the meeting. Hence why:

"He(the boss) went on a rant, a tirade of how disrespectful we were being. What could be more important than a meeting with him? "From now on, I(the boss) want it to be like this: You're just in time. Whatever you're doing, nothing can be that important". While well, I(interviewee) always learned in the Netherlands: the customer comes first, everything internal can wait (interviewee 9)."

In quote twenty-three, the interviewee mentioned that he always talked normally to his bosses, but that was not common for other employees. He mentioned that his management position gave him that possibility, the way of communicating between people with lower ranks and people with higher ranks in the organization is different. People below the management position took a more cautious approach, people behave differently towards people with a different rank, behaving like they are not equal. The Dutch employee is used to the Dutch cultural value 'equality' which stands for that in the Netherlands everyone is treated as an equal and no one is better than anyone else. In situations like this, clashes with the British cultural standard of 'Leadership' can come forward, since Dutch people are used to talking freely to anyone in the organization, no matter which rank they are. It also clashes with the Dutch value of 'Usefulness' since the Dutch consider that helping customers is more useful and important than attending a last-minute meeting with the boss.

Flexibility

In the United Kingdom, the decision making process can take quite a lot of time, and appointments are not necessarily fixed. People do not immediately start working on things discussed in the meeting. In fact, they keep things open and try to find better solutions in future meetings. The meetings are not the place where definitive knots are being cut, keeping situations more flexible. The quotes below show typical quotes related to this cultural standard.

Quote 25:

"There are situations where I ask: when can that and that be taken care of, and then they say: yeah, okay, that will be sometime this week and then it could just take two, three weeks. And then I would go right back to them, say hey on Monday, you said you would do it this week, that was last Thursday. That means to me it would be done today, but they don't like that. And then they're really like ho, on my time, things have come up in the meantime (Interviewee 1)."

Quote 26:

"What I have also seen a couple of times and that was specifically with Dutch and British that you make X amount of agreements in a meeting. ABC is agreed upon and then in the Netherlands, that's just, that's it, you move on, you then go and follow those agreements. And the British often, after the meeting, they have a few more meetings on that subject, and then they come back a week later and say: We've changed our minds, we want it to be different again, and is it always discussed again. That goal-oriented process of making agreements and moving on, they don't really do that here. It is often,

a little bit of making agreements, but they can still be discussed a little bit afterwards and then they may need a few more meetings for that subject (Interviewee 2)."

For the Dutch people, meetings are perceived as places where things are discussed and often decided. Here they reach certain agreements and start working on them and try to finish their tasks before the predetermined deadline. The Dutch cultural value 'Reliability' plays a big part this way their thinking. According to Enklaar (2007), in Dutch culture, when you ask or suggest something to someone and that person answers "yes," that is an agreement and you are expected to honour it. The Dutch often think that they made an agreement with the British in places like meetings, however, the British do not perceive those things discussed in meetings as a fixed agreement. The British meetings are not really about reaching a consensus and clear agreements but are about sounding out positions after which everyone goes back to work. Hence, the British cultural standard 'Flexibility' may clash with the Dutch cultural value of 'Reliability'.

Conservatism

The British can sometimes really hold on to common traditions and practices, being less open to new things. Things might be done in the same way for 100 years, not changing the way for a better solution. British companies might also give preference to British companies with which they have worked for a longer duration of time over new, non-British companies. The quotes below show typical quotes related to this cultural standard.

Quote 27:

"The Dutch are more open-minded, more open to new things, and check what is this something new on the market? Or let's see how things can change grow. Let's show interest in other people and cultures. We Dutch are more wanting to understand and improve things. In Britain, they are very traditional, things that have been done in a way for 100 years will still be done that way for 100 years. Even if it doesn't work, we complain about it or not, and then we just let it go on (Interviewee 5)."

Quote 28:

"What I notice very much in my work, for example, is that when we look for new manufacturers and I come up with manufacturers I have worked with in the past, the first question is always: What other UK brands work with them? So, English people always like to work with a manufacturer that other English brands are already working with as if they understand each other better or in terms of working relationships. So if you tell them I worked with them and they have a good price and good quality. They

ask: Which English brands do they produce for? Uh, none. Okay, well, then we can't work with them either (Interviewee 15)."

For this British cultural standard 'Conservatism' quote 27 states perfectly what the differences are between the Dutch and the British in this regard. The British like to work with things that they know of that they work, not necessarily wanting to change those things because of the fact that they work. Sticking to common practises and traditions. Meanwhile, the Dutch are always open to better suggestions and ways to do their jobs, for the Dutch this is the way to remain more competitive. Less value is attached to sticking to common practises in the Netherlands.

4.2 Underlying values of the cultural standards

In this section, it is tried to connect the cultural standards that were found with the more general cultural logic of the British. Even though the cultural standards describe typical British behaviour in the eyes of the Dutch, the cultural standards can often overlap and be regarded as being interrelated to each other. Therefore some of the cultural standards belong to the same cultural logic, which is described in the way of underlying values. In this section, it is attempted to identify the cultural logic (value) that explains why the British behave like mentioned in the cultural standards. In the following sections, the British cultural standards are clustered into groups stemming from the same cultural values. Unlike cultural standards, cultural values cannot directly be derived from behaviour, therefore these cultural values have been derived from literature and the comments of the interviewees. Each cultural value is concretised by a number of sayings and reasonings related to that specific cultural value. In total three cultural values have been established which are described and analysed below.

4.2.1 Respect for Authority, Class, and Tradition

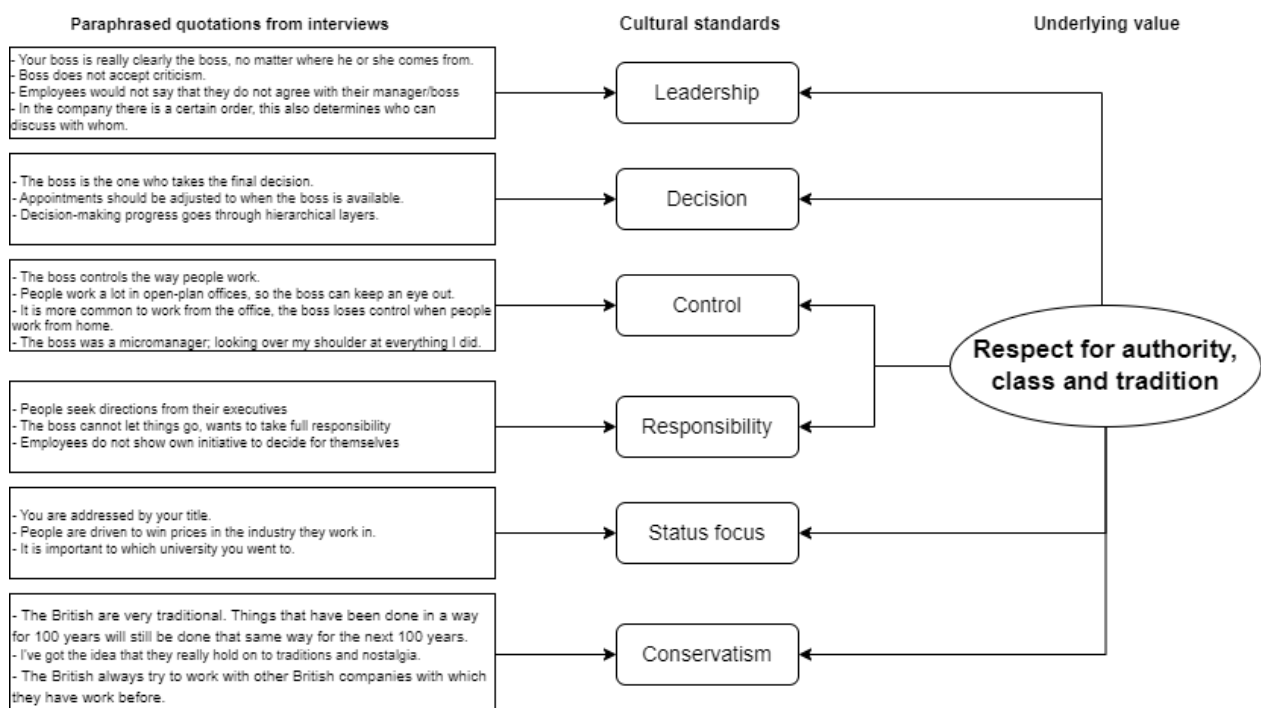
The cultural value of 'Respect for Authority, Class, and Tradition' is at the origin of six British cultural standards that were found in this study. These cultural standards are Leadership, Decision, Control, Responsibility, Status Focus, and Conservatism. The value of Respect for authority, class, and tradition can be described as being acceptive towards people with authority, a higher position or class, and towards old traditions. On the British work floor, people show great respect to people with authority, a higher position, and class. Although not liking to be bossed around, the British respect the hierarchy in the organization and often want to be told what to do. This is because British employees formally perceive the leader as the person who should decide. Therefore, good leadership is important in the British working society. A Proverb like 'Never fall out with your butter' which means that one should not quarrel with the person who pays your salary indicates that respect is and should be shown to people in higher positions. The decision making process is also done by high ranked employees and is

not challenged by people with lower ranks. This is done because British lower ranked employees respect the authority of employees with a higher rank. They simply accept that a person with a high rank is 'pulling the strings' which means that that person is the one who decides. This is also the reason why the higher ranked person in a British organization carries the responsibility. Lower ranked people in the same organization also seek directions from the higher ranked people because of this.

It often occurs that the British manager or boss wants to control what his or her workforce is doing. Employees might dislike this behaviour, however, they would not directly mention this to their boss. They accept this because they respect the authority of their boss, it is the person who is allowed to do so. When the boss is in the office, all the employees also will be there. Not being on the work floor while the boss is there might be perceived as disrespectful. Next to that, having a high status in British society causes the person to gain more prestige. The higher this status goes up, the more it is respected. People try to keep building up their prestige in order to move up in classes since this provides the person to be more respected. British conservatism attaches great value to traditions and common practises and when things work well they are not easily changed. The British are very traditional and nostalgic and in the working society, there is a lot of respect for long standing relationships and constructive ways of working. In figure 3, the relationship between the British cultural standards with its quotes and the underlying value is presented.

Figure 3

The underlying value of Respect for authority, class, and tradition



4.2.2 Respectability

The British underlying value of 'Respectability' is at the origin of five British cultural standards that were found in this study. These cultural standards are Indirect communication, Emotionally inexpressive, Evasive, Closedness, and Socialising. As soon as they leave their private homes, the British feel the need to display their fine good manners and show that they are a gentleman/lady, otherwise they fear losing their respectability. Being an ideal gentleman/lady involves a prototypical behaviour: being extremely polite, reserved, and using various subtle indirect ways of expressing your opinion. According to Fox (2014), when the British express their opinion they do not boast but always use understatements, moan about the work, do not talk too serious about their work, and do not mention private matters at work. The British keep their private sphere protected because they value privacy as a great asset. It is expected to hold back emotions, to muddle through, and not openly disagree. A proverb related to this is "The nail that sticks out gets hammered down", which means that if you deviate from the norm, you'll face resistance. Hence, behaving via the social British norms is expected in their society. Another very popular British catchphrase related to this cultural value is "keep calm and carry on" which means that whatever is happening, carry on, do not let go of your reservedness and withhold getting emotional or showing anger, disappointment, or disgust.

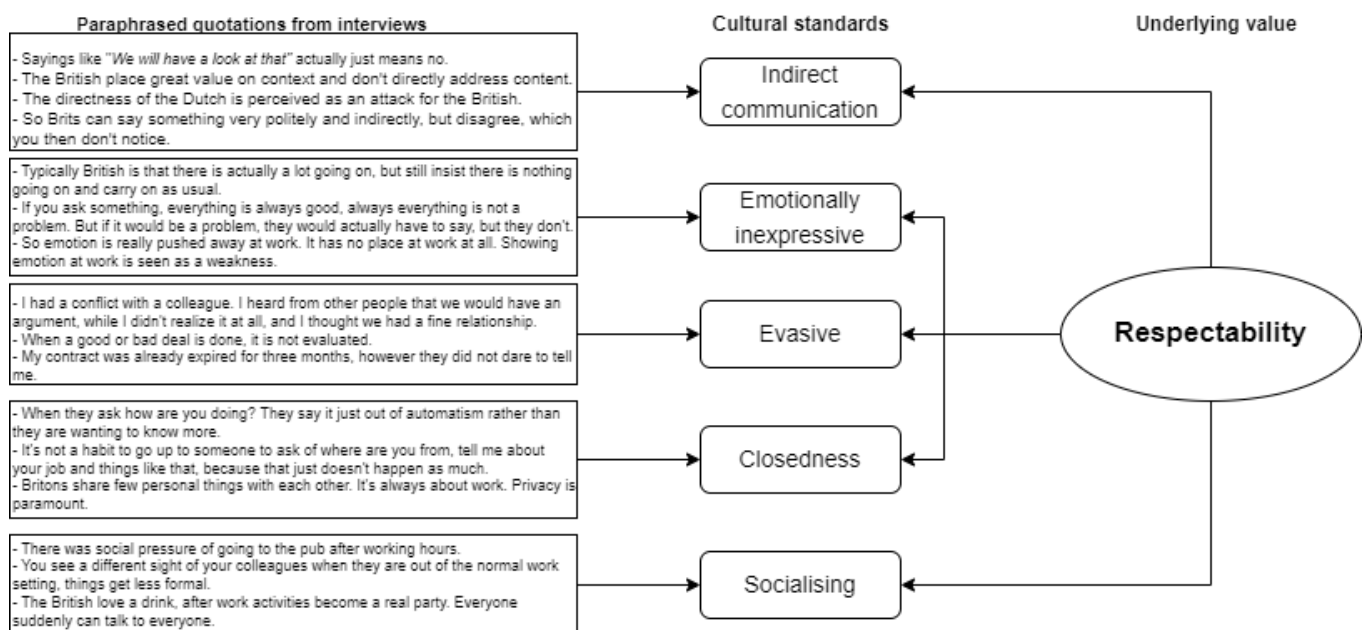
The British tend to communicate with high context, in an indirect way. They '*beat around the bush*' which means that getting to the point of a conversation is avoided. The British do this because saying things directly might let the other person feel offended, they try to be a gentleman by not offending anyone. They might lose their respectability when they cause embarrassment to others. The British feel constantly assessed by others as to their position in the hierarchy, so they are anxious to stick to all kinds of social rules in order not to be socially undervalued. This is also the reason why the British tend to be evasive, which is done because engaging in a confrontation might offend another person or the person itself can be offended. They feel embarrassed when this happens because the social politeness rules are not followed when one is offended. This means that the behaviour is not gentlemanly anymore which detracts from their respectability.

Another thing the British do to maintain their respectability is restraining from showing emotions. The British show a '*stiff upper lip*' which means that they have great self-control with showing emotions. They find that showing emotion is a sign of weakness that detracts from their professionalism and one's respectability. A real gentleman is not impressed and does not show his feelings unless with irony and understatement. Showing plainly your feelings and pain is associated with lower class and provincials.

The British tend to keep their conversations on the work floor purely business like, showing closedness towards questions about their private life. ‘My home is my castle’ is something the British generally use. This means that people can do what they want in their own homes and that others should not interfere in their private lives. Outside of their homes they once again need to behave like a gentleman, so for the British, it is very uncommon when someone tries to interfere with their privacy. This deviates from gentlemanly like behaviour and can therefore detract from one’s respectability. The only moment when people can deviate from the social norms of being a gentleman next to being at home is when socialising. According to Fox (2014), In the pub, there is more equality and less hierarchy, and people can relax and get loose, freeing themselves from the stress of their work. People do not have to be extremely polite and indirect in the pub because it does not detract from one’s respectability. In figure 4, the relationship between the British cultural standards with its quotes and the underlying value is presented.

Figure 4

Underlying value Respectability



4.2.3 Competitiveness

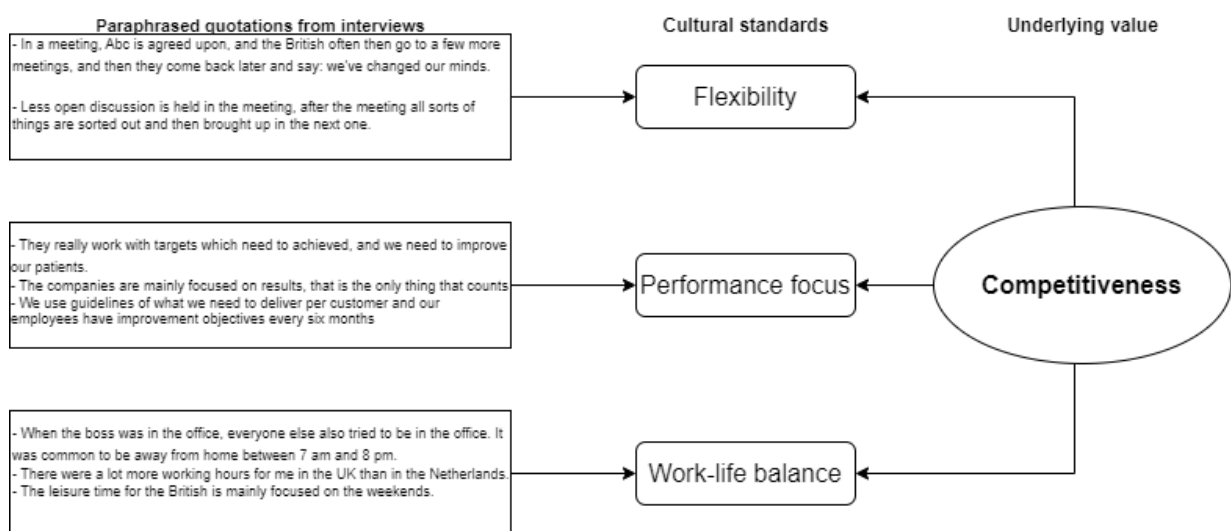
The underlying value of Competitiveness is at the origin of three British cultural standards that were found in this study. These cultural standards are Flexibility, Performance focus, and Work-life balance. The British perceive situations as competitions and want to be the best in those situations. The British are flexible in their meetings to get the best results, are focused on performance and the work-life balance is often strained, since working overtime to get the job done is very common, limiting leisure

time to the weekends. In the working environment, a common saying is ‘*We need to stay ahead of the curve*’ which means that the company they work for needs to stay ahead of the competition. They also say that ‘*Man is made to surpass himself*’ meaning that anyone should try to do even better than they can.

The British keep their decision making process in meetings flexible to keep searching for a better solution because getting to the best outcome can increase the competitiveness of their company. In British companies, the focus often is on performing as well as possible. They say ‘the harder you work, the luckier you get’ which means that the harder someone works, the more chances it will provide for themselves which results in more competitiveness. Additionally, The British tend to make a lot of working hours. The British use the proverb ‘The early bird catches the worm’ which means that a person who starts working early has more chance of success. Working more hours could result in getting more things done for the company and therefore increasing competitiveness. In figure 5, the relationship between the British cultural standards with its quotes and the underlying value is presented.

Figure 5

Underlying value Competitiveness



5. Discussion and conclusions

In this fifth and final chapter, the discussion and conclusion of this research are shown. To start with, the British cultural standards, as perceived by the Dutch which are found in this research are shown in an overview. Next to that, the academic relevance and the practical relevance of this study are discussed. Furthermore, the limitations of this study and options for future research are given. To end with, a conclusion about this research is given.

5.1 British cultural standards as perceived by the Dutch

In order to answer the main question, the first sub-question: *“What British cultural standards are experienced by Dutch expatriates?”* needs to be answered first. During this research fourteen British cultural standards have been identified and described in section 4.1. The British cultural standards found are stated below.

1. Indirect communication
2. Decision
3. Respect for leadership
4. Closedness
5. Evasive
6. Responsibility
7. Performance focus
8. Emotionally inexpressive
9. Work-life balance
10. Socialising
11. Status focus
12. Control
13. Flexibility
14. Conservatism

Further, the second sub-question: *“What cultural logic has led to these British cultural standards?”* Also needs to be answered. This has been done in section 4.2. Here it is shown how the British cultural standards are related to a specific cultural value. These values are an explanation of why British people behave in a specific manner. In this section, it is also described why there are clashes, based on the perceived cultural standards, between the Dutch and the British in the working environment. The

established British cultural values are Respect for authority, class, and tradition, Respectability, and Competitiveness.

5.2 Academic relevance

This research extended the current literature on British culture, by researching British culture seen from a Dutch perspective which is normally done from a general point of view. Most research into British culture uses quantitative studies where they use cultural dimensions to describe British culture, however, this study extends the current literature by describing typical British behaviour in the way of cultural standards. Firstly, a comparison is made with studies using an etic approach. When looking at the cultural differences between the Dutch and the British based on the Hofstede model some differences can be explained. For example, looking at the 'Masculinity' dimension for which the Dutch score low and the British score high. A masculine society like the British is driven by competition, achievement, and success (Hofstede, 2022) which fits perfectly with the underlying value 'Competitiveness' found in this research. Hofstede's model also showed differences in uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation which were not found in this study. The study by Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (1994) found cultural differences between the Dutch and the British in hierarchy, where the Dutch culture tends to be very egalitarian. This difference is also found in this study with the cultural standard 'Leadership'. The Dutch strive for equality between the employees and the people with the higher ranks in the organization while for the British, the employees behave differently towards people with higher ranks and vice versa. Another difference found in the study by Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars was that there is wide consensus in Dutch decision making while for British making this is much less. This is also found in this study with the cultural standard 'Decision', where the Dutch perceived British decision making as to be done by higher ranked people in the organization. However, the best comparison could be made between Erin Meyer's (2014) cultural dimensions model and this study. This can be seen in the table below:

Table 3

Erin Meyer's (2014) cultural dimensions compared to this study.

Erin Meyer (2014) cultural dimensions: The British are compared with the Dutch	British cultural standards from this study	British underlying values
A higher-context communication	Indirect communication	Respectability
Less negative indirect feedback		
Less confrontational	Evasive	
	Emotionally inexpressive	
	Closedness	
	Socialising	
Less decision making consensus	Decision	Respect for Authority, Class and Tradition
Less egalitarian	Leadership	
	Responsibility	
	Control	
	Status focus	
	Conservatism	Competitiveness
	Flexibility	
	Performance focus	
	Work-life balance	

In this table, it can be seen that there are some similarities in the found cultural differences, in the way of communication, confrontation, decision making, and hierarchy. However, this study extends the current literature by describing typical British behaviour in the way of cultural standards. These cultural standards provide much more insights into cultural differences than the etic models of Hofstede, Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, and Meyer, these only provide a few cultural differences based on pre-determined dimensions. Where Meyer only described five differences in cultural dimensions, this study extends the literature with cultural differences in the way of fourteen cultural standards. Next to that, this study also explains why the British behave in a certain manner, in the way of the identified underlying values. This step is absent in other studies where they only describe cultural differences using the etic approach. Next to that, what is also different in this research is that it focusses on the difference in culture in the working environment rather than in society which most other studies are about.

Secondly, the comparison between this study and studies using an emic approach is made. As opposed to the above mentioned studies, the qualitative study by Lawrence and Edwards (2000) used an emic approach and interviewed businesspeople. They found that the main cultural differences between the Dutch and the British are conformity, restraint, and equality. Where the cultural difference in

conformity is similar to the cultural standard 'Decision' found in this study and the cultural difference in equality can be seen back in the cultural standard 'Leadership' just like the cultural differences found in Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars. Furthermore, the cultural difference in restraint is similar to the cultural standard of 'Closedness'. However, the study by Lawrence and Edwards (2000) only showed parts of the differences in Dutch and British culture and therefore is not rigorous enough. Next to that, the study by Lawrence and Edwards (2000) does not show the cultural logic behind certain behaviour, which in turn was done in this study. Furthermore, Tayeb (2015) studied English cultural values and the comparison with this study can be seen in the table below.

Table 4

Tayeb (2015) compared to this study.

Tayeb (2015) English cultural values	British cultural standards from this study	British underlying values
	Indirect communication	Respectability
	Evasive	
Self-control and Reserve	Emotionally inexpressive	
	Closedness	
	Socialising	
Deference and Inequality	Decision	Respect for Authority, Class and Tradition
	Leadership	
	Responsibility	
	Control	
Class consciousness	Status focus	
Conservatism	Conservatism	
	Flexibility	
	Performance focus	
	Work-life balance	
Liberty		
Honesty and Trust		
Xenophobia		

First of all, it should be mentioned that Tayeb (2015) only researched English cultural values, and this study researched British cultural standards and values. As can be seen in the table above, some similarities between the studies have been found. However, this study is much more detailed than the study by Tayeb (2015) because of the number of cultural standards compared to the few values Tayeb provided. This study also extended the literature by adding a second dimension to the results in the way of underlying values which describes the cultural logic behind the typical British behaviour. Therefore, this study provides a thick description of the British culture as seen from a Dutch

perspective. Researching the British culture from a Dutch perspective also adds to current literature since this is not known to be done before.

5.3 Practical relevance

Very often, the Dutch who were interviewed did not understand why the British behave the way they do. But, the longer the Dutch people stayed in the UK, the more they needed to try to adapt to British culture. Some interviewees even mentioned that they were 'Verbritst', meaning that they behave a lot like the British. However, there were also some interviewees who were less willing to change which resulted in different behaviour from the British person towards the Dutch person or worse, in conflicts between both persons.

This study along with its fourteen British cultural standards offers insight into typical British behaviour where the Dutch have difficulties with. This helps prepare Dutch people who will be working in the United Kingdom for the different ways of behaving at work. It also identifies the cultural values held by the British that explain that behaviour and are quite different from the values the Dutch find important. Thus, providing the Dutchmen coping mechanisms to comprehend and resolve cultural clashes and to improve the professional collaboration between the Dutch and the British. With the help of this study, Dutch professionals can prepare themselves to communicate and do business with the British by knowing the existing cultural differences and reducing possible friction coming from these differences.

5.4 Limitations and future research

As with all research, this study is not without limitations. Firstly, an important note is that this study only looked at the areas in which the Dutch and British differ. As a result, the similarities between the two have not been made visible. The cultural standards described are those that stand out from the Dutch perspective. The British standards which are described in this study are only a part of British culture since they are derived from the Dutch perspective, thus not describing the complete British cultural logic. Descriptions of cultural standards coming from other countries will reveal other aspects of British culture, hence why generalization of the results is not possible.

According to Grimm (2010), when doing interviews for research, people can give biased answers which are more socially acceptable. This phenomenon is called social desirability bias (Grimm 2010). Several interviewees mentioned that they do not want to talk too negatively about the British because they have the opportunity to live there, possibly resulting in giving more socially acceptable answers. This tendency results in the over-reporting of responses that are socially desirable and the under-reporting

of those responses that are deemed to be socially undesirable (Grimm, 2010). Having a negative effect on the reliability of this study. However, to minimize this negative effect, the interviewer stated that their answers could not be redirected toward the interviewees and that they would be anonymized. This is done to remove barriers that would withhold the interviewee to speak freely.

Another limitation of this research is the absence of interviewees from Wales and Northern Ireland. The interviewees mentioned a couple of times that there could quite possibly be differences between the region within the United Kingdom, hence why making conclusions about the whole country can be quite difficult. Future research into cultural standards and the underlying values (as perceived by the Dutch) for the four separate countries within the United Kingdom could solve this problem.

Even though this research gives insights into cultural differences between the Dutch and the British, the cultural frictions stem from a Dutch perspective, not taking into account how the British perceive these frictions. To answer the main question: *“In what situations do Dutch and British people experience problems/frictions in business communication and collaboration?”* even better, research into how the British perceive the Dutch cultural standards and their underlying values should be conducted.

5.5 Conclusions

The goal of this research was to answer the main research question: *In what situations do Dutch and British people experience problems/frictions in business communication and collaboration?* This question is answered with the help of the critical incidents provided by the interviewees, which by coding are identified British cultural standards perceived by the Dutch, they are Indirect communication, Decision, Closedness, Evasive, Responsibility, Performance focus, Emotionally inexpressive, Work-life balance, Control, Status focus, Socialising, Leadership, Flexibility, and Conservatism.

After identifying the cultural standards, they have been clustered by three underlying values namely: Respect for Authority, Class, and Tradition, Respectability, and Competitiveness. These underlying values have been identified with the use of literature and typical British proverbs and idioms. The values describe the cultural logic behind British cultural standards; the typical British behaviour.

The results of this study showed some comparisons with previous research, which increases the validation of the existing literature and this study. However, this study adds some new cultural differences in the form of cultural standards and provides the cultural logic behind typical British behaviour, as perceived by the Dutch. Thus providing a thick description of cultural differences between the Dutch and the British from the Dutch point of view.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Questions used in the interviews

VRAGENLIJST CRITICAL INCIDENT ANALYSIS

1. Het onderzoek is bedoeld om uit te vinden hoe de professionele samenwerking tussen Nederlanders en Britten gaat en wat er verbeterd kan worden. Geeft u toestemming om bandopname te maken? Het interview is vertrouwelijk en de letterlijke inhoud wordt niet gedeeld. Quotes van dit interview worden gebruikt in het onderzoek maar kunnen niet naar u herleidt worden.
2. Zou u wat over uzelf kunnen vertellen?
 - Hoe lang werkt u al voor dit bedrijf?
 - Wat voor werkzaamheden doet u?
3. Ik begrijp dat u regelmatig contact hebt met Britse 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 Brit(en) (rang, taakverdeling)?
 - Is de communicatie goed te noemen?
 - Hoe zou u de sfeer tussen Nederlanders en Britten beschrijven?
 - Is de samenwerking volgens u goed of kan het beter?
 - Zijn de persoonlijke relaties volgens u goed of kunnen ze beter?
4. **Ik wil graag over uw ervaringen met Britten spreken.** Hoe zijn uw ervaringen met Britten in het algemeen?
5. Wat zijn de meest opvallende verschillen tussen Nederlanders en Britten volgens u?
 - (Heeft u een voorbeeld situatie hiervan wanneer u dat merkt?)
6. Wat mist u (vaak) bij Britten? (In hun dagelijks gedrag, karaktereigenschappen?)
 - (Als hij/zij specifiek eigenschappen van Britten noemt) Kunt u daar een voorbeeld van geven? (wanneer mist u dit?)

Standaard format voor critical incidents

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Wat was de meest positieve (specifieke) ervaring die u had met Britten op de werkvloer? Wat gebeurde er precies? Wat maakt dit voor u tot zo'n positieve ervaring?2. Wat was de aanleiding voor die gebeurtenis?3. Op welke manier droeg deze gebeurtenis bij aan een succesvolle samenwerking?<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Hebt u nog meer van zulke voorbeelden? |
|--|

1. Kunt u ook een minder prettige ervaring noemen die u had met Britten? Wat gebeurde er precies? Wat maakte dit voor u tot een onbevredigende ervaring?
2. Wat was de aanleiding voor die gebeurtenis?
3. Op welke manier belemmerde deze gebeurtenis de succesvolle samenwerking?
4. Hoe reageerde u?
5. Hoe is het afgelopen?
6. Waarom gedroeg de Britse collega zich op die manier, denkt u?

- Hebt u nog meer van zulke voorbeelden?

1. Hebt u wel eens misverstanden tussen Britten en Nederlanders meegemaakt?
2. Hebt u wel eens meegemaakt dat u verrast werd door gedrag van Britten?
3. Hebt u wel eens meegemaakt dat u de Britten niet begreep? (Spreektaal, gedrag, etc.)
4. Hebt u wel eens meegemaakt dat u het oneens was met uw Britse collega?
5. Hebt u wel eens een conflict gehad met een Britse collega?
6. Hebt u wel eens andere problemen gehad met Britten?
7. Hoe zou je de standaard karakter eigenschappen van een Brit omschrijven? Waardoor komt dit?

8. Een goede leidinggevende: Hoe moet die zich gedragen?
 - Verschillen Nederlanders en Britten daarin?

9. Een goede collega: Hoe moet die zich gedragen?
 - Verschillen Nederlanders en Britten daarin?

10. Een goede werknemer(indien in gesprek met een manager): Hoe moet die zich gedragen?
 - Verschillen Nederlanders en Britten daarin?

11. Hoe wordt er door de Britten omgegaan met procedures binnen het bedrijf en de controle daarop?

12. Hoe gaat het besluitvormingsproces in het Britse 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 Brit. Wat is uw mening en waardoor komt dat?

13. Wilt u nog meer vertellen over uw ervaringen met Britten? Hebben we alles besproken?

Mocht u nog iets te binnen schieten over de verschillen tussen Nederlanders en Britten, dan kunt u mij altijd mailen.

Met de resultaten maken we een wetenschappelijke studie. Uw naam zal niet vermeld worden en we zullen ervoor zorgen dat uitspraken niet tot u te herleiden zijn. Als u geïnteresseerd bent in de uitkomst, kan ik die naar u toesturen.

Dank voor uw medewerking!