

Culture and communication

Spring 2021



Observations?

- Have you learned something new about Finns during the past week?
- Anything odd/interesting/funny/etc. you might have noticed?

>> How do Finns usually greet?

First encounters video

Greeting someone in Finland (before COVID-19)

shaking hands and making eye contact

brief and firm

no supporting gestures

direct, informal

Read more on Finnish customs and manners:

<https://finland.fi/life-society/a-guide-to-finnish-customs-and-manners/>



1) Video: *On being polite when greeting or discussing with someone in Finland*

2) Let's discuss in groups!

- How would you compare the ways of greeting someone (*face-to-face, in an email etc.*) in Finland and in your home country? What is similar, what is different?
- What is regarded as polite communication in your home country?
- How do people deal with silence e.g. in discussions? Is it regarded normal, awkward, or something else?



*About Finnish way of
communication*

Individualism

Equality

Personal space

Listening to others

Comfortable silence

Suggestions as face value

Hospitality

Avoiding interrupting

"I really meant that! "

Straightforwardness

"That's just the way we are."

Recycling of well-known
cultural stereotypes

Finnish silence - Only a myth?

Inevitable part of
Finnishness?

Effects of globalization and
multiculturalism



Culture and cultural competence?

Culture? Cultural competence?

Cultural iceberg (Hall 1976): We can only see the tip of an iceberg – as of culture we can observe and see only a small piece that is part of a larger whole

Edward T. Hall (1976) proposed that culture is like an iceberg. 10 % is visible (external) and 90 % is "below the surface."

behaviour and artefacts

explicit

observable

accessible to senses

conscious

core values

beliefs

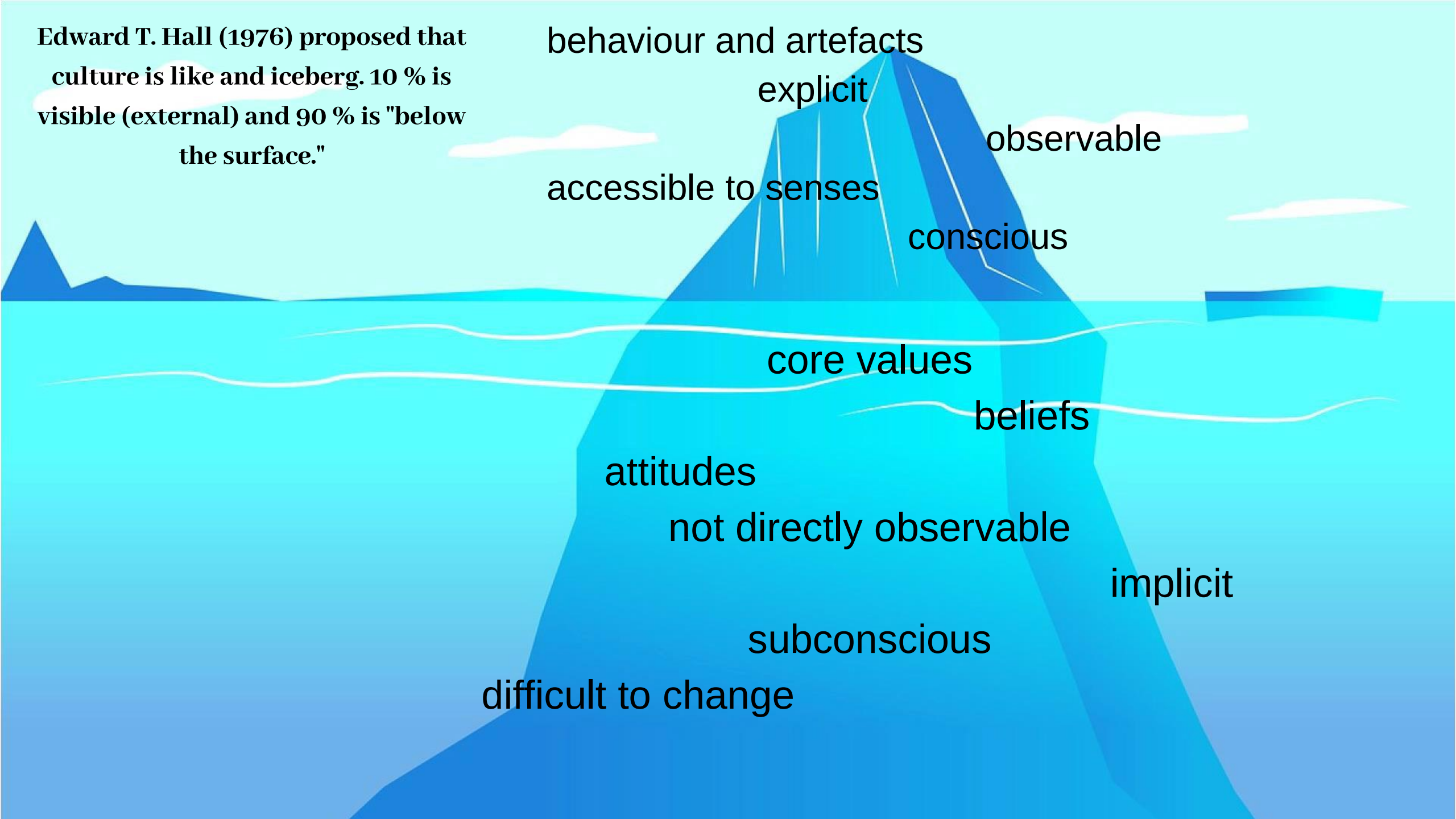
attitudes

not directly observable

implicit

subconscious

difficult to change



The Cultural Dimension Test

- Which dimension was the most similar/different?
- Why, in your opinion?

- What did you learn?
- Which descriptions do you agree/disagree with? Why?
- What did you think of the test overall?

Dimensions:

- **Power Distance** (all are not equal; how do people think about this)
- **Individualism** (self-image determined by “I” rather than “We”)
- **Masculinity** (driven by competition, achievement and success)
- **Uncertainty Avoidance** (protecting oneself from the unknown)
- **Long Term Orientation** (adapting to change rapidly)
- **Indulgence** (giving in to desires)

What about stereotypes?



COOKING...



... LIKE A BRIT
AVAILABLE...



... AS A BELGIAN



FLEXIBLE...
... AS A SWEDE



SOBER...
... AS THE IRISH

THE PERFECT EUROPEAN

SHOULD



BE ...



TALKATIVE... AS A FINN



HUMOROUS... AS A GERMAN



FAMOUS...
... AS A LUXEMBOURGER



HUMBLE...
... AS A SPANIARD



GENEROUS...
... AS A DUTCHMAN



ORGANISED...
... AS A GREEK



DRIVING...
... LIKE THE FRENCH



TECHNICAL...
... AS A PORTUGUESE



CONTROLLED...
... AS AN ITALIAN



DISCREET...
... AS A DANE

In your group:

- 1) Write down 3-5 stereotypes of your own country (use “sticky notes”)
- 2) Then add one to everyone else’s list.

Use the **Google Jamboard** and the page with your breakout room number written on top.

<https://jamboard.google.com/d/1Zk2drMFIB9qG6DdNdt1jv4jBQiJLX3e9ZpyWloX4xCE/edit?usp=sharing>

Then discuss:

- What do you think about the stereotypes listed in the activity?
- Are they true or not? Why?
- Where do some of these stereotypes come from?
- Can they be useful?
- What can be the problem with these labels? What prejudiced attitudes and behaviors can stereotype and labeling lead to?
- How could these stereotypical and prejudicial views be tackled?

Stereotypes

- Can become part of an identity if they come up repeatedly in everyday life and also in academia
- Sometimes based on “truth” and often not
 - Stereotypical thinking shapes the way we see the reality and the way we act
 - Stereotypes shape our social reality because they teach us to notice certain things in a certain way

Automatic thinking handles information quickly

Hard effort thinking takes time

- Stereotypes about Finland?

Pre-tasks for lesson 3: The Finnish way of life

Friday 5.2.

Read the article 1. *A GUIDE TO FINNISH CUSTOMS AND MANNERS.*

(you read only 4 things not the whole article):

1. Group 1 (Louise, Mareike, Mariko) reads **Identity, Religion, Gender, Conversing.**
2. Group 2 (Alicia, Leonard, Wenwen) reads **Information technology, Languages, Names and titles, Greeting.**
3. Group 3 (Alice, Jakub, Réka) reads **Eating, Drinking, Tipping, Smoking.**
4. Group 4 (Ho Ching, Sophie, Tina) reads **Visiting, Time and the seasons, Festivals, The sauna.**

2. Finland: a Society of Trust

Write to the Discussion forum at least one thing that you find similar and one thing that is different between your own country and Finland. Write also about your thoughts on trust.