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Introduction

The extent to which cultural influences impact management practices in specific countries and across countries has been a topic of substantial research interest during the last half a century. Several scholars of culture have argued that culture sustains, reproduces and transforms social relations (Hofstede, 1980; Redding, 1980; Adler, 1991; Martin 1992; Sackmann, 1992). This permits people living within a particular culture to live their lives with a sense of uniformity and singularity. It also means that people living in a particular society perceive themselves as different from other groups of people. The sense of belongingness generated by the commonalities of behaviour and perception is jealously guarded and can be a source of conflict during inter-group interactions (Martin 1992). Intercultural encounters therefore result in heightened perceived differences. Just as people who perceive their cultures to be similar are attracted to each other, people from cultures perceived to be dissimilar may find each other relatively unattractive and the negative relations are usually self-reinforcing and therefore tenacious.

Building on these understandings, it has been suggested that managers must understand their cultures to be able to understand their behaviours. At the same time they must make determined efforts to understand their host cultures (through intercultural competence development exercises) to be able to perform successfully in other societies. In other words, where individuals from different cultures are involved in an intercultural encounter, perceived similarities will be contingent on adaptation of the parties to each other's culture.

The present paper introduces some of the cultural foundations that underlie management practices of a single Scandinavian country – Denmark. The aim is to provide the reader with some insight into how managers in this society behave and why they behave the way they do. It also aims at suggesting what challenges the cultural rules of accepted management behaviour carry for Danish managers working in organisations located in other cultural contexts.

In terms of structure, the next section of the paper provides an overview of the works of two prominent Dutch scholars of culture whose writings have influenced much of the discussions on management culture during the last three decades – Hofstede and Trompenaars. This section provides a theoretical foundation on which our discussions of Danish management styles are based. I then present an overview of the Danish economy followed by a discussion of the cultural foundations of Danish management and their implications for Danish expatriate behaviour in foreign organisations.

Two Theoretical Views on Culture

The importance of culture on management practices in general has been popularised in the research works of two Dutch scholars Hofstede, (1980) and Trompenaars (1997). This section of the paper provides a quick overview of their cultural dimensions as a basis for our subsequent discussions of Danish culture and management practices.

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

Geert Hofstede's work has been accepted in the contemporary literature as providing an elegant and analytically convenient theoretical framework for studying macro cultures. His studies have shown that the following five dimensions provide an adequate description of the culture of any given society or organisation.

The five dimensions are as follows:

1. Power distance
2. Uncertainty avoidance
3. Individualism – collectivism
4. Masculinity-femininity
5. Time dimension

Hofstede explains power distance as the extent to which a society accepts the fact that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally. In small power distance countries citizens emphasise equality and egalitarianism; subordinates feel free to challenge decisions of their superiors etc. High power distance countries reflect the opposite behavioural attributes. The existence of a high power distance in organizations can result in low levels of trust, acceptance of close supervision as a good managerial practice, quiet acquiescence of superiors' decisions and instructions, centralization of decisions, etc.

It is however important to note that these practices are accepted not because subordinates like or enjoy them, but mainly because they are culturally legitimized. The consequences for an individual who goes against them are so frightening that only a few entertain the thought of doing so, especially when they are aware that their efforts may not result in any change of attitude within the organization. But it is not unusual for subordinates to complain about the "irrational" behaviour and decisions of their superiors in private.

Uncertainty avoidance indicates the extent to which people in a society feel threatened by uncertain and ambiguous situations and therefore try to avoid these situations. In high uncertainty avoidance cultures, people tend to emphasise the

creation of greater career stability, establishing more formal rules. People in these societies do not tolerate deviant ideas and behaviour. Lower uncertainty avoidance cultures are less rule-bound and more flexible in approach to life and work situations.

In Hofstede's conceptualisation, individualistic societies are characterised by a loosely knit social framework, in which people are supposed to take care of themselves and of their immediate families only. Collectivistic societies, on the other hand, are characterized by a tight social framework, in which people distinguish between in-groups and out-groups; they expect their in-group (relatives, clans and organizations) to look after them.

The managerial consequences of low individualism (i.e. collectivistic societies) include superior-subordinate relations based on patronage, fear and unquestioned loyalty. Thus factors such as kinship and ethnicity have a major bearing on managerial decisions and behaviour. Considerations such as formal qualifications, expertise or performance are relegated to a distant second position. Thus belonging to the "wrong" social group can disqualify an individual and thereby render any assessment of his formal qualifications absolutely worthless.

Masculinity relates to such attributes as assertiveness, the acquisition of material things and not caring for others. Feminine societies emphasise the soft values in life, caring for others and nature and eschewing violence and encouraging social cohesion. Finally, the time dimension of culture relates to the way members in an organization exhibit a pragmatic future -oriented perspective rather than a short-term point of view.

Trompenaars' Cultural Dimensions

Trompenaars, another Dutch scholar of business culture has argued that every culture distinguishes itself from others by the specific solutions it chooses to certain problems which reveal themselves as dilemmas. He then discusses the manner in which people address the dilemmas from three perspectives: (1) problems which arise from people's relationships with other people; (2) problems which come from the passage of time; (3) and those which relate to the environment. Based on this categorization and supported by his own empirical investigations, he arrived at seven fundamental dimensions of culture:

1. Universalism versus particularism
2. Individualism versus communitarianism
3. Specific versus. Diffuse cultures
4. Affective versus. Neutral cultures
5. Achievement versus. Ascription status
6. Sequential versus synchronic cultures
7. Internal versus External control cultures

Universalism versus Particularism (Rules vs. Relationship)

This dimension addresses what people consider more important within an organization: the rules or the relationships. In universalistic cultures, people share the belief that general rules, codes, values and standards take precedence over particular

needs and claims of friends and relations. The rules apply equally to the whole "universe" of members in a universalistic society, and any exception weakens the rule. In particularistic cultures, unique circumstances and relationships are more important than abstract societal rules. Every society contains degrees of both universalism and particularism, and they jointly contribute to keep a stable cultural environment. Thus, it is necessary for businessman not only to be aware of this dimension, but also to know how to solve these differences and make them work.

Individualism vs. communitarianism (the individual vs. the group)

This dimension clarifies how we relate to others, as a group member or as an individual. The main difference between individualists and communitarians is that individualists assume personal responsibility for what they do, whereas communitarians assume joint responsibility for their tasks.

These two categories also differ in terms of their motivation: money is the main motivational factor for individualists, but the communitarians consider regard and support of colleagues and family as the primary motivating factors. However, there exists mutuality between these categories: the individualistic culture views the improvement to communal arrangement as the means to achieve individualism; and the communitarian culture perceives individual capacities as a mean to create better conditions for their groups.

Neutral vs. Emotional

The dimension addresses the question of the extent to which people in a given society display emotions. People belonging to neutral cultures try to keep control over their appearance, whereas, people from emotional culture show their feelings plainly. Emotional cultures would probably regard their neutral colleagues as emotionally dead, or as hiding their true feelings.

Diffuse vs. Specific Cultures

This dimension draws a distinction between specific and diffuse oriented cultures. Specific culture is defined by having a small area of privacy, clearly separated from the much larger public space. People are easily accepted into the public space, but it is very difficult to get into the private space. In this type of culture, work and private life are sharply separated. Individuals in diffused cultures are expected to have a large private area and a small public one. New comers are not easily accepted into any of these spaces, but once they have been accepted, they are admitted into all layers of the individual's life.

Achievement vs. Ascription

Achievement refers to doing, but ascribing refers to being. This dimension assumes that there are two types of society: one accords status to people with what they have recently accomplished and by how well they performed; the other ascribes status its members on the basis of such attributes as age, gender, colour of skin, birthrights, and social connections.

This differentiation is relevant in situation of promotions, transfers and cross-cultural job assignment. Indeed, achievement-oriented cultures automatically would send the person they viewed as the best qualified for the job. However, this criterion may not satisfy the qualifications of the ascription-oriented culture.

Sequential vs. Synchronic Time

This dimension concerns the perception of time in different cultures. There are two aspects of time orientation: (1) the relative importance cultures give to past, present and future, and (2) the manner in which time is structured. In the past-oriented cultures, the future is seen as a repetition of past experiences. Respect for ancestors and collective historical experiences are characteristics of a past-oriented culture. People in a present-oriented culture are not so much concerned with past or future events, but focus mostly on their day-by-day experiences. In a future-oriented culture, most of human activities are directed towards future events. People do things based on already prepared plans.

Time may be structured in two ways: sequentially and synchronically. In a sequential time perception, people tend to do one thing at a time. They strongly prefer planning and keeping to plans once they have been made. Time commitments are taken seriously and staying on schedule is a must. On the contrary, people from a synchronic time perception usually do several things at a time. To them, time evolves in a circle and this allows many things to take place simultaneously. Time commitments are desirable rather than absolute. Plans are easily changed. Synchronic people place greater emphasis on interactions with others and promptness depends on the type of relationship.

This dimension is closely linked with the previous discussion of universalism vs. particularism in the aspect of relationship, because a synchronic culture considers relationships to be very important, taking time and not being rushed to fit into a schedule. This perception frustrates a person from a sequential culture, because of delays and lack of commitment in getting things done on time.

Internal vs. External control

The last dimension relates to the way people treat their environment. Trompenaars defined two kinds of society according to this criterion: internal and external control (or inner- and outer-directed orientation). In the internal control culture, people see nature as a complex machine and machines can be controlled if there is a right expertise. People in such societies do not believe in luck or predestination. If you take advantages of the opportunities, you can have what you want. Thus, they believe that nature can be dominated if men make the effort. In contrast, people from the external control culture have a more organic view of nature. People believe that there exists powers that you cannot control and men are part of a greater whole. An organization is perceived as a product of nature, owing its development to the nutrients in the environment and to a favourable ecological balance.

Management Practices in the Danish Society

With these cultural models as a background we can now attempt to provide some insight into approaches adopted to manage businesses and organisations in Denmark and the cultural foundations guiding these practices. But before we initiate this discussion let us take a quick look at the Danish economy.

Profile of Danish Economy

All economic analyses in 2007 described the Danish economy as undergoing a strong expansion, fuelled by private consumption growth, low unemployment, and rising real wages. This thoroughly modern market economy features high-tech agriculture, up-to-date small and medium-scale industry, extensive government welfare measures, comfortable living standards, a stable currency, and high dependence on foreign trade. Denmark is a net exporter of food and energy and enjoys a comfortable balance of payments surplus. The GDP (Purchasing Power Parity): in 2006 was \$198.5 billion with an annual growth of 3%. Major sectors of the economy and their contributions to GDP in 2006 were as follows: agriculture 1.4%, industry 24.6% and services 74%. Figure 1 shows an overview of real GDP growth between 1995 and 2005¹.

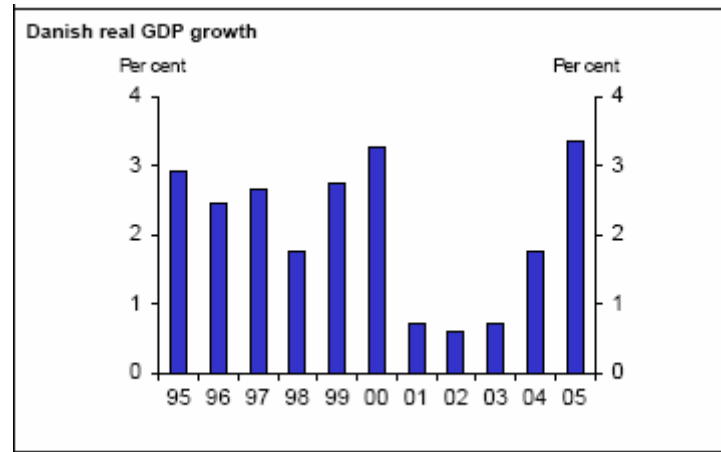
During the last five decades, Danish companies have achieved high levels of integration into the global economy importing inputs, exporting products and services and investing in production activities abroad. Their high degrees of internationalisation have enabled them to be global players in some key sectors thereby compensating for their limited domestic market and enjoying the economies of scale and scope that global operations offer.

Although the business landscape is still dominated by small and medium-sized companies, there are few giants among them. The giants count companies such as Danfoss, Grundfos, A.P. Moller-Maersk Group, B&O, Novo Nordisk and F.L.Smidth. There are also less known world giants such as Vestas (which has 28 percent of the world market for wind turbines) and three of the world's six largest manufacturers of hearing aids (Oticon, Widex and GN Resound).

Since the beginning of this millennium, Denmark has been rated the world's most competitive country in virtually every important ranking of economic competitiveness: the World Economic Forum, Economist Intelligence Unit and the World Bank.

¹ <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/da.html>

Figure 1: Danish GDP growth between 1995 and 2005



Source: Statistics Denmark.

Labour force:

The labour force in 2006 was 2.91million out of the total population of 5.4 million. Of the remaining 2.5 million just under half are children and students without work, and about 40% are pensioners and those taking early retirement or are classified as outside the labour force for various reasons². The sector composition of the labour force in 2006 was as follows: services 73%, industry 24%, and agriculture 3%³.

The significant growth experienced by the Danish economy during the turn of the century has meant that unemployment rate has fallen drastically from 12.9 % in 1994 to 5.1 % in 1998 and to under 3% in 2007.

However, the Danish employment boom has not been to the benefit of all population groups equally; current average unemployment rates remain high or proportionally higher amongst immigrants and refugees (16.9 %), their descendants (7.9 %). Again unemployment rate for women in 2006 was 5.6% and therefore higher than the national average.

A Profile of a Dane

How do Danes describe themselves? A helpful approach to answering this question is to refer to writings by some of the leading Danish scholars. I have selected a quotation from an essay by Klaus Rifbjerg, a renowned Danish novelist for this purpose. He writes:

² http://denmark.dk/portal/page?_pageid=374,520430&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

³ <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/da.html>

“A Dane is a creature with a big heart and an equally big inferiority complex. The latter is for external use only and shows, paradoxically, that we are finally becoming more successful outside Denmark and have made it to the front pages of the international press, to the amazement of absolutely everyone. To think that it was possible! To think that we little insignificant Danes, with our successful well-organised social structure, our sound economy, our high level of education, our women's lib and our sexual tolerance have come all that way!”

We have earlier noted that the Danish economy has been assessed as being highly competitive. From a socio-psychological viewpoint the Danes are considered among the happiest and most contented people in the world, according to “people rating” surveys such as the World Values Survey. The general feeling of well-being of the Danish people can be partly attributed to the core values in the Danish culture.

Seen in terms of Hofstede’s five dimensions, Denmark is an extremely homogenous society with feminine characteristics and low uncertainty avoidance. Like other west European societies, the Danish people exhibit individualistic behavioural traits and are generally short-term oriented. But the negative social consequences of individualism are cushioned by what some scholars describe as institutional collectivism – i.e. state coordinated collectivistic social arrangements that fit neatly with the feminine (soft value) dimensions of the society. Thus, the Danish society can be justifiably described as both individualistic and collectivistic. As discussed subsequently, this duality is reflected in the accepted ways of resolving conflict within the labour market and in organising unemployment support schemes.

Jante’s Law and Danish Manifest Culture

Egalitarianism, conformity and consensus-seeking are the core values usually associated with the Danish society. Most Danes explain these core values in terms of *Jante’s Law*. Jante’s law is actually a concept created by the Danish/Norwegian author Aksel Sandemose in his novel *A Refugee Crosses his Tracks* (in 1933), where he portrays a small Danish town he called Jante as it was in the beginning of the 20th century. This description has been used to symbolize most typical Danish towns of that period – with everyone knowing everyone else.

Jante’s law is composed of ten main principles, but they are all variations on a single theme: *Don't think you're anyone special or that you're better than us*. The other rules are listed in box 1.

Box 1

The ten rules of Jante Law

1. Don't think that *you* are special.
2. Don't think that you are of the same standing as *us*.
3. Don't think that you are smarter than *us*.
4. Don't fancy yourself as being better than *us*.
5. Don't think that you know more than *us*.
6. Don't think that you are more important than *us*.
7. Don't think that *you* are good at anything.
8. Don't laugh at *us*.
9. Don't think that anyone cares about *you*.
10. Don't think that you can teach *us* anything.

The practical and positive consequences of these core principles are that social and political systems in Denmark strive to achieve social equality, i.e. a social life condition in which all individuals achieve the same status in the society. Voting rights, freedom of speech and assembly, property rights and rights to education, health care and social security are key areas in which Denmark has made significant efforts to ensure equality. Efforts continue to be made in the areas of gender equality as well as in integration of foreigners into the Danish society.

Danes interact with strangers in an informal and friendly style garnished with a generous amount of humour and self-irony. Most foreigners see them as modest, punctual, honest, simple and straightforward as collaborative partners. But others warn that although Danes may appear easygoing at first glance they can also be very reserved and rather aloof. This attitude is a reflection of the general scepticism with which Danes approach strangers, cautiously sizing them up before opening up to them. Danes therefore live in a diffused society (to use Trompenaar's terminology). They have a small public space and a big private space.

Those who know the Danes well remind foreigners that a disparaging remark about Denmark or its people would hurt every Dane very badly, again a reflection of the impact of Jante's law. And while the Dane would hardly make a big issue of the insult, he/she would remember it for many years.

Management Philosophy and Leadership Styles

Danish workers and managers exhibit high preference for flat organisational structures with as few layers of hierarchy as possible (Fivelsdal and Schramm-Nielsen, 1993). Decision making is usually delegated and employers at all levels have significant decision making authority in their job functions. Most Danish companies involve their employees in decision making process. This results in a democratic and open working environment with short channels of command from the management to the common employee.

Danish managers play down on their authority to an extent where they seem almost scared by its exercise; direct orders are rare, and managers make a point of being able to talk on equal footing with everybody, including shop floor workers (Schramm-Nielsen *et al.*, 2004). They appear more comfortable with the term "responsibility" and "competence" when describing their decision making authority. Although subordinates enjoy free hand to take decisions, they are also expected to accept the risk and consequences of making wrong decisions.

The impact of the core values of the Danish culture is very much evident in the management practices of Danish companies' organisations. For example, scholars frequently use the concepts such as *consensus* and *cooperation* to describe Danish management practices and labour relations. In operational terms Danish workers and their representatives devote substantial time to holding meetings during which

worker-related issues are discussed and debated. The act of debating itself has a significant value; it reflects the act of listening to others and being listened to in a process of consensus seeking. Key decisions may not be immediately taken at these meetings; and this may not be the main objective of the meeting, it is the process of discussing that matters most.

The consultative approach to management also compensates for the Danish dislike for formalization and bureaucratic rules. If there are no specific rules to follow, people are compelled to talk with each other until they reach agreement on important issues, no matter how long it may take.

Pragmatism and *professionalism* are other recurrent concepts used to describe Danish managers and workers. At lower levels of work organisations, less emphasis is placed on theoretically prescribed solutions and more on experiential and experimental knowledge. Even at managerial levels, the preferred problem solving approach is to combine pragmatism with theoretical knowledge. Fivelsdal and Schramm-Nielsen (1993) use the term “*trained intuition*” to describe this dominant mode of problem solving.

Labour Market and Industrial Relations

Over the past century or so, the Danes have successfully blended elements from both liberal market economy and mixed economy with socialist flavours to shape their labour market relations and to create the foundation for the welfare state. Pedersen (2006) uses the term “*negotiated economy*” to describe this unique socio-economic model. The dominant characteristics of the model are that the nation’s economic and social resources are developed collectively through negotiations and full participation of firms, business associations, labour unions, politicians and state bureaucrats. The combined efforts of these stakeholders, working in concert, provide the society as a whole with an opportunity for learning, responsible leadership and coordination of support instruments that produce mutual benefits to all parties.

The labour market policy in particular has been described by Pedersen (2006:239) as a system of “*flexicurity*” i.e. the combination of security and flexibility. By European standards, the Danish employees enjoy a relatively low level of job security. That is, employers have substantial latitude to hire and fire workers in response to market signals. But institutional arrangements have been cleverly crafted to protect individual employees that might lose their jobs at any given point in time. This takes the form of comprehensive unemployment benefits, health insurance, free education and other welfare benefits. This social safety net is substantial enough for workers and employers alike to be less worried about the economic consequences of unemployment to the individual and his family. In addition to this, collective contributions to skill upgrading during periods of unemployment combine with counselling to enable individuals to prepare themselves for new jobs in new industries or different parts of the country.

These arrangements make the Danish labour market one of the most flexible in the world, allowing for high level of labour mobility with 30% of the labour force

changing jobs every year (more than 800,000 times a year).⁴ Furthermore, the flexible rules of hiring and firing make it easy for companies to continuously adapt their employees to market needs. Herein lies part of the explanation for the low uncertainty avoidance exhibited by Danish workers (i.e. institutionalised security allows them the freedom to take risks that employees in other countries would not dare to take for fear of losing their jobs).

Work ethics are horizontally coordinated through membership of work teams, unions and professional organisations. That is, colleagues expect a tacitly agreed set of work standards from their co-workers and individual employees justify their membership of professional groups and work teams by upholding the high standards of work expected of them. The fear of exclusion provides powerful sanction for individuals to respect and adhere to the established ethical codes of conduct. The codes are further reinforced through vocational training for the lower level workers and executive training programmes for people at higher professional levels.

Gender and the Labour Market

The participation rate and employment for women in Denmark is high by international standards, a fact which has contributed to narrowing the income distribution between the genders. This has also resulted in significant changes in family life; the hectic family life with both parents working outside the home means men are compelled to accept their share of the household chores.

Although Denmark is egalitarian, deliberate government efforts are still required to reduce the persistence of the gender-divided labour market. Equal wages for men and women for the same type of job, better conditions for families with children are still challenging areas for policy initiatives. In general the average wages for women are 81% of men's wages and women in certain sectors of the economy earn 76% of men's wages.

As mentioned above, the unemployment rate for women is higher than the national average and there are fewer women at top management levels in both private and public work organisations.

Organisations

Membership of unions is very high; nearly 80% of all employees are union members. Employers are also organised but to a lesser degree than employees. Even where employers are not organised they normally take their cue from agreements reached between the organised groups on the labour market when negotiating with their employees.

In contrast to the labour markets in most other European countries, where essential conditions are regulated by legislation, those in the Danish labour market are mainly founded on agreements between the employers' and employees' organisations. These encompass basic areas such as minimum wages, the right to strike and hours of work.

⁴ The Danish Government (Oct. 2005), "*The Danish Reform Strategy*", p 48

Where the parties fail to reach an agreement within the time frame stipulated by law the Danish parliament (*folketing*) is required to pass a law that legalises the compromise proposal put forward by the conciliation officer.

Industrial court

The Industrial Court in Denmark is a court of law concerned with disputes about the collective agreements in the labour market. It deals with cases concerning breaches of agreements, the legality of conflicts, strike notices and the validity of agreements. The court also decides on cases concerning the jurisdiction of the Conciliation Board.

The composition of the Industrial Court ensures that it enjoys the confidence of the different organisations in the labour market. The Bench consists partly of a number of lay assessors, of whom half are selected by workers' organisations and half by employers' organisations, and partly by a presidium of professional judges (usually judges in the Supreme Court) who are selected by the lay assessors.

The Industrial Court is the only court in its field, and appeals against its judgements can thus not be made to the ordinary courts. Cases are brought to the court only after exhaustive attempts have been made by the parties involved to resolve the disputes out of court. Again, before any court hearing the Danish Labour Court Act, demands that several preliminary meetings must be held with a presiding judge to settle the dispute as quickly as possible.

Implications for Danish Leadership Styles Abroad

As noted above, the highly egalitarian Danish culture encourages Danish managers to view their subordinates and themselves as moral equals. They will therefore expect their employees to have their say in decisions affecting them and share in goal-setting activities of their companies. This, by implication, means that they will tend to be highly frustrated with employees in less egalitarian cultures where unequal distribution of power and status is expected and employees tend to comply with directives without questioning them. They are also likely to be disappointed with the leadership styles of local managers in these societies because these managers, behaving according to the expectations of their cultures, would tend to be less participative and more authoritarian and directive. They are reluctant to accept what is obvious to the local managers – i.e. that directive leadership is more effective in achieving organisational goals in these societies.

The Danes are also likely to have serious problems as subordinates in less egalitarian societies where they are expected to accept directives from their local superiors without questioning. Thus differences in views on appropriate leadership styles are likely to generate clashes between Danish expatriates (as subordinates and/or superiors) and local managers in less egalitarian societies with tensions reducing the benefits of collaboration and overall organisational goal attainment.

Viewed from an intercultural perspective, these observations suggest that improved intercultural competence development of Danish managers is a necessary requirement for improved performance abroad. The conventional wisdom is that foreigners are usually met with scepticism in their encounters with nationals of their host country

due to the initial uncertainties about their behaviour. Intercultural competence therefore aims at reducing the potential anxieties that may surround such encounters and thereby ease the process of acceptance in the host society. That is, when individuals from different cultures share a common frame of understanding and interpretation (i.e. culturally prescribed mental models) this reduces their degree of uncertainty in the company of each other.

Summary and Conclusion

In sum, the Danes have developed a highly unique and relatively successful social and economic model during the last century, combining elements of liberal economics with socialism to produce their brand of mixed economy. Today, Denmark has one of the world's highest tax burdens, shortest working weeks and most generous annual holiday entitlements. It also has an exceptionally high degree of unionisation and a flexible labour market with high level of labour mobility. Firms therefore experience greater degree of cooperation with their employees than the antagonistic and conflict-prone relationships found in many other industrialised nations. Most Danish companies are found to have flat organisational structures and maintain open door policies (i.e. free flow of information between management and workers).

I have started this profile by quoting from an essay written by Klaus Rifbjerg, a Danish novelist in 2003. I believe his reflections capture the essence and spirit of the Danish people and their ability to manage their economic and social affairs to the envy of many European countries. It is therefore appropriate to summarise the discussion by returning once again to Klaus Rifbjerg's words as they capture the essence of the discussions above. He says:

“One of the best traits in our national character is our unsentimental conviction that it is unnecessary to take recourse to violence in order to stake your claim in the world. Instead of resorting to greed, we have learned to use our expertise to get ahead..... If it is possible to talk about such a thing as national intelligence, then the Danish national intelligence is remarkable because of its willingness to doubt itself. When others become cocksure, the Danes tend to allow themselves a moment of doubt. This doubt is often highly productive, inasmuch as the definition of intelligence is the ability to solve problems and act effectively in unfamiliar and difficult situations - there have, as we have seen, been quite a few of those in Denmark's history and if we look closely, the problems have almost always been solved in a sensible way.”

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