

THE CULTURE MAP:

Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business



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LOW CONTEXT

COMMUNICATING

HIGH CONTEXT

DIRECT NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

EVALUATING

INDIRECT NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

EGALITARIAN

LEADING

HIERARCHICAL

CONSENSUAL

DECIDING

TOP DOWN

TASK BASED

TRUSTING

RELATIONSHIP BASED

CONFRONTATIONAL

DISAGREEING

AVOIDS CONFRONTATION

LINEAR TIME

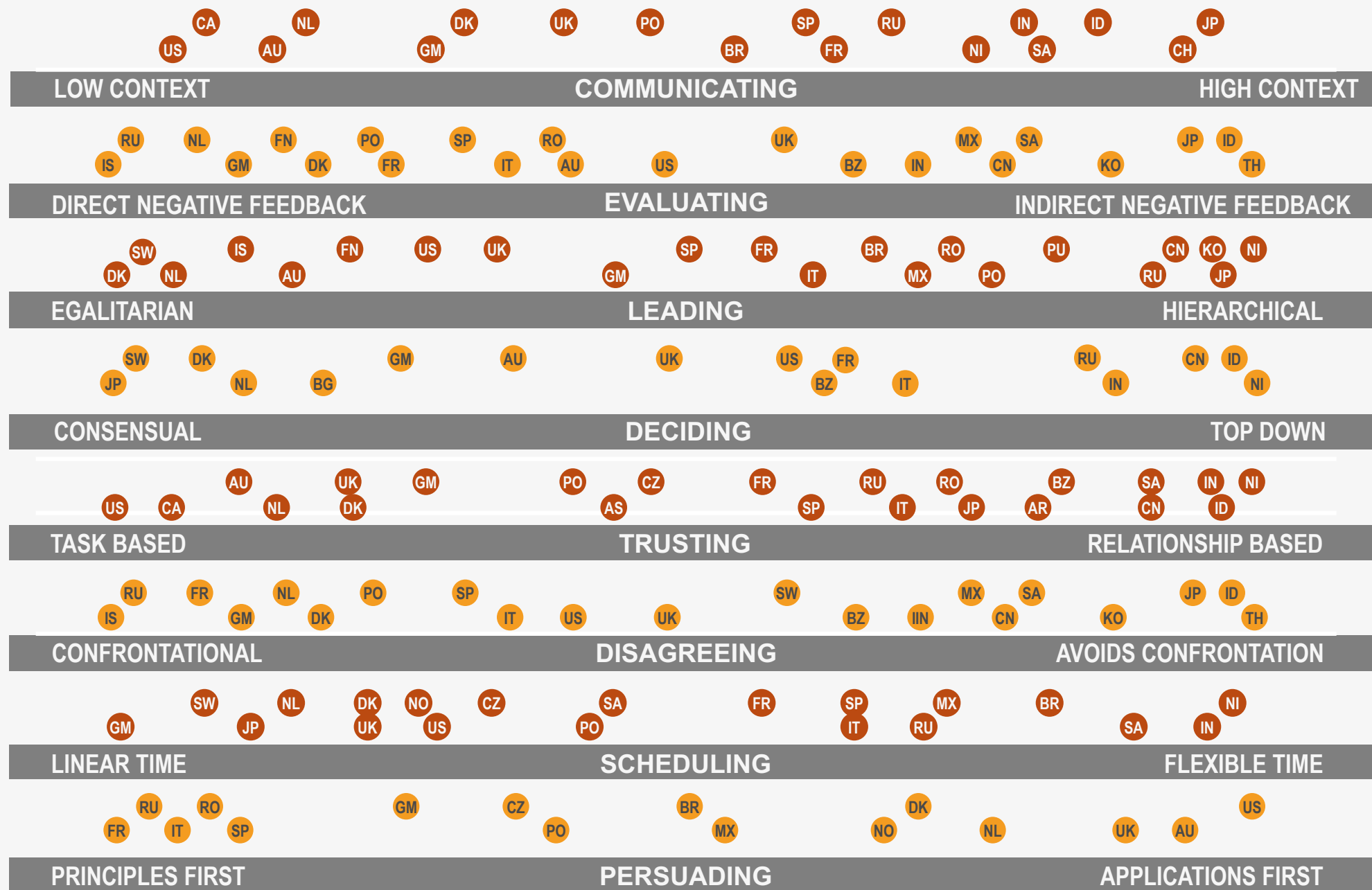
SCHEDULING

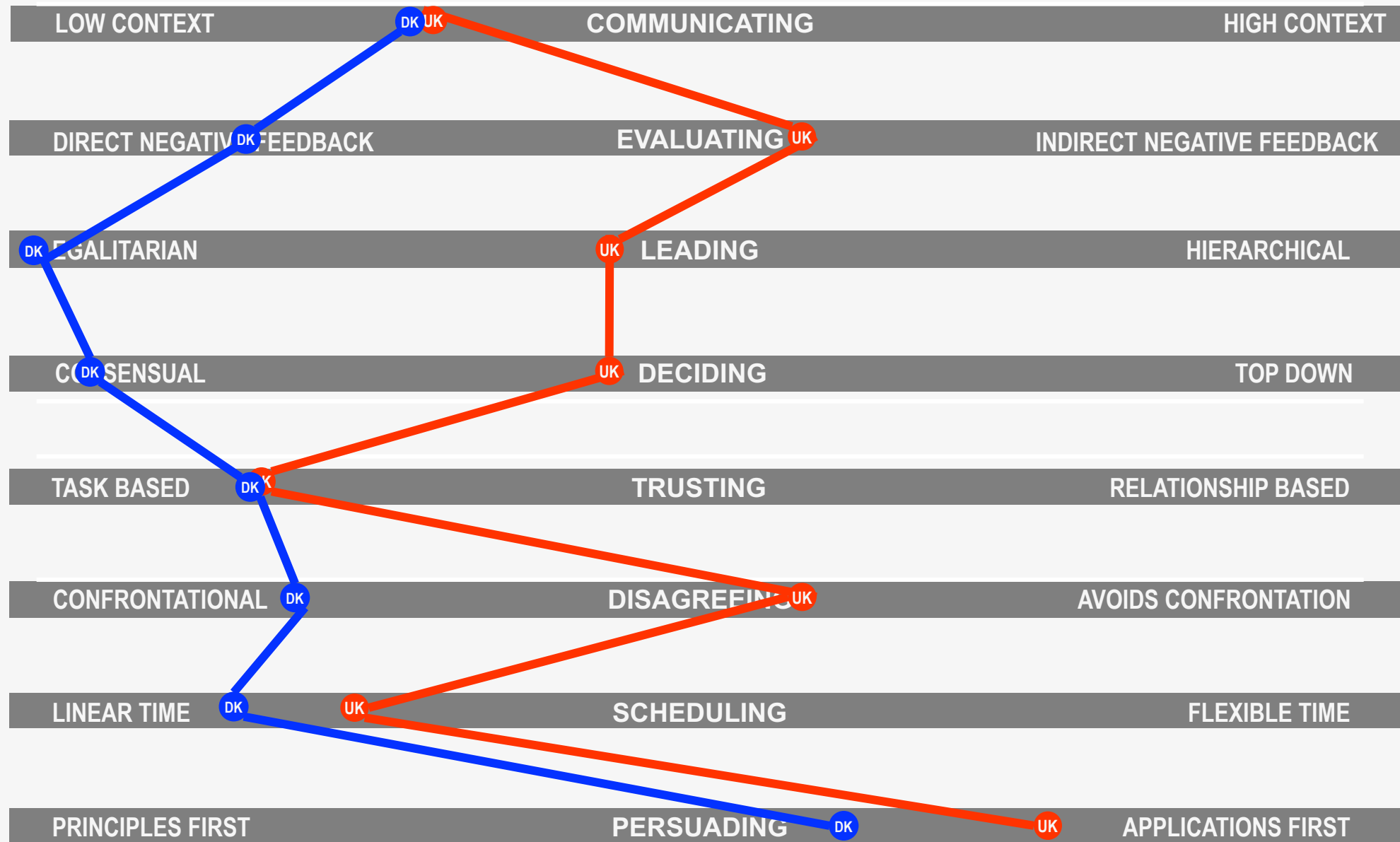
FLEXIBLE TIME

PRINCIPLES FIRST

PERSUADING

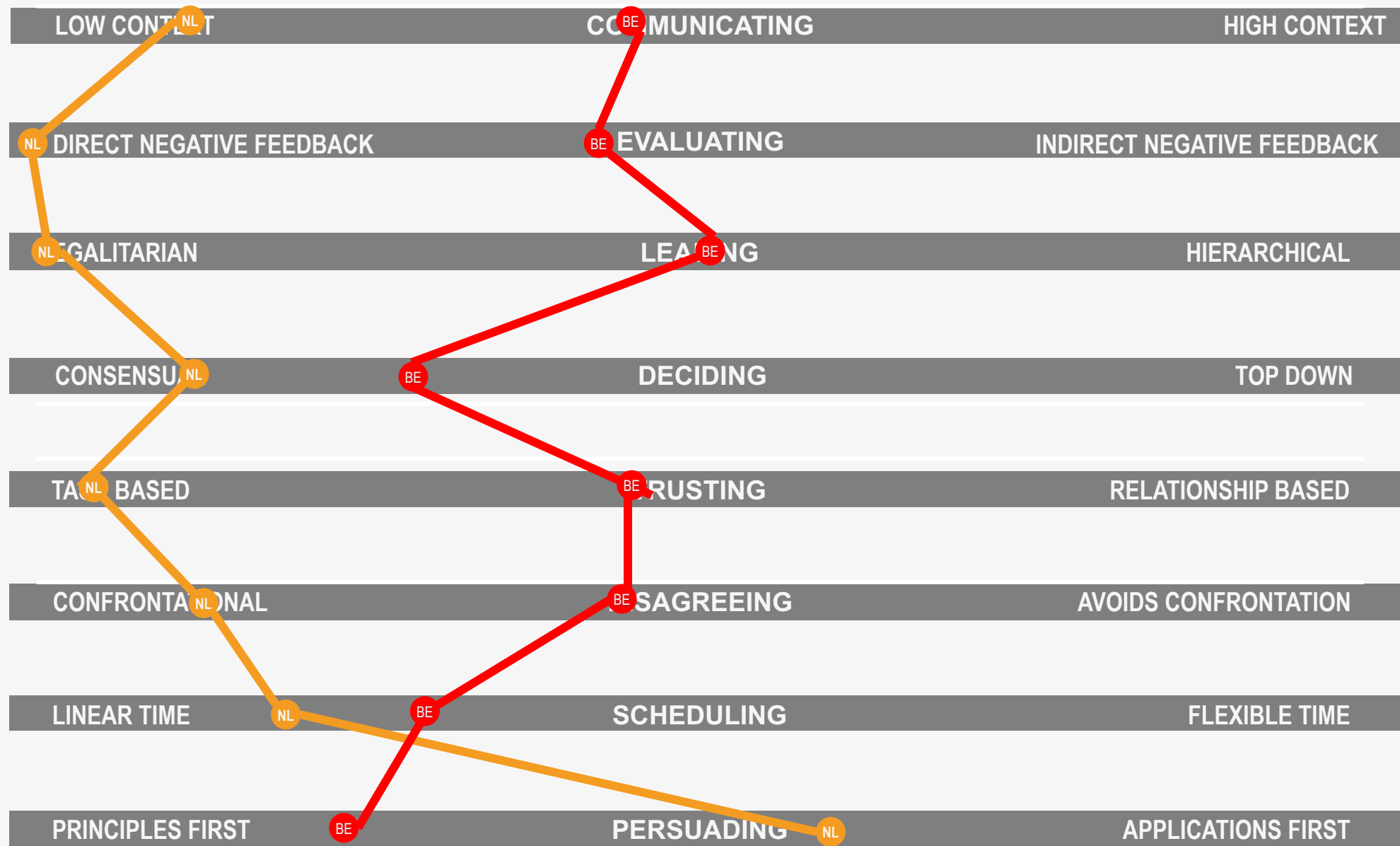
APPLICATIONS FIRST



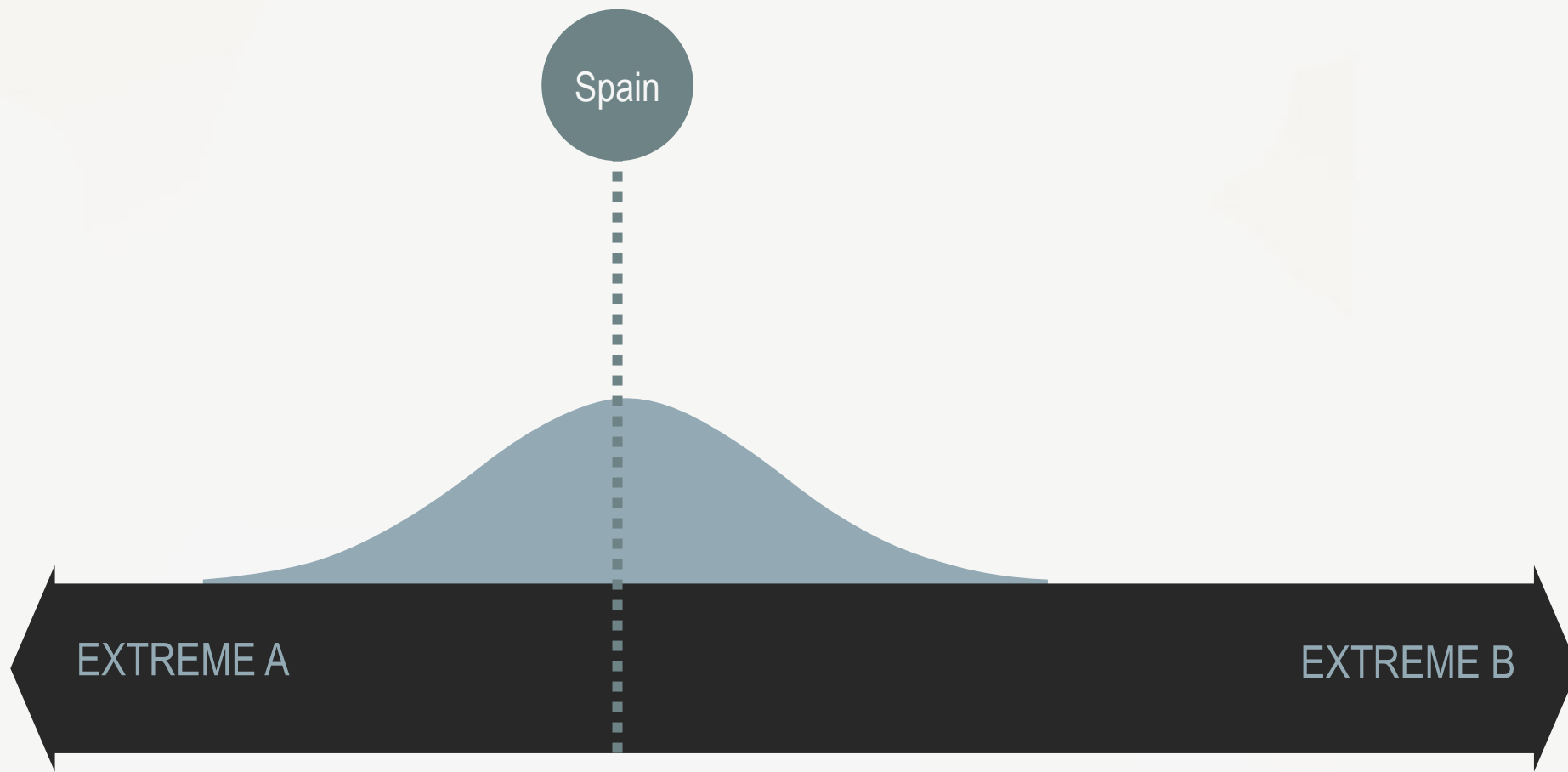


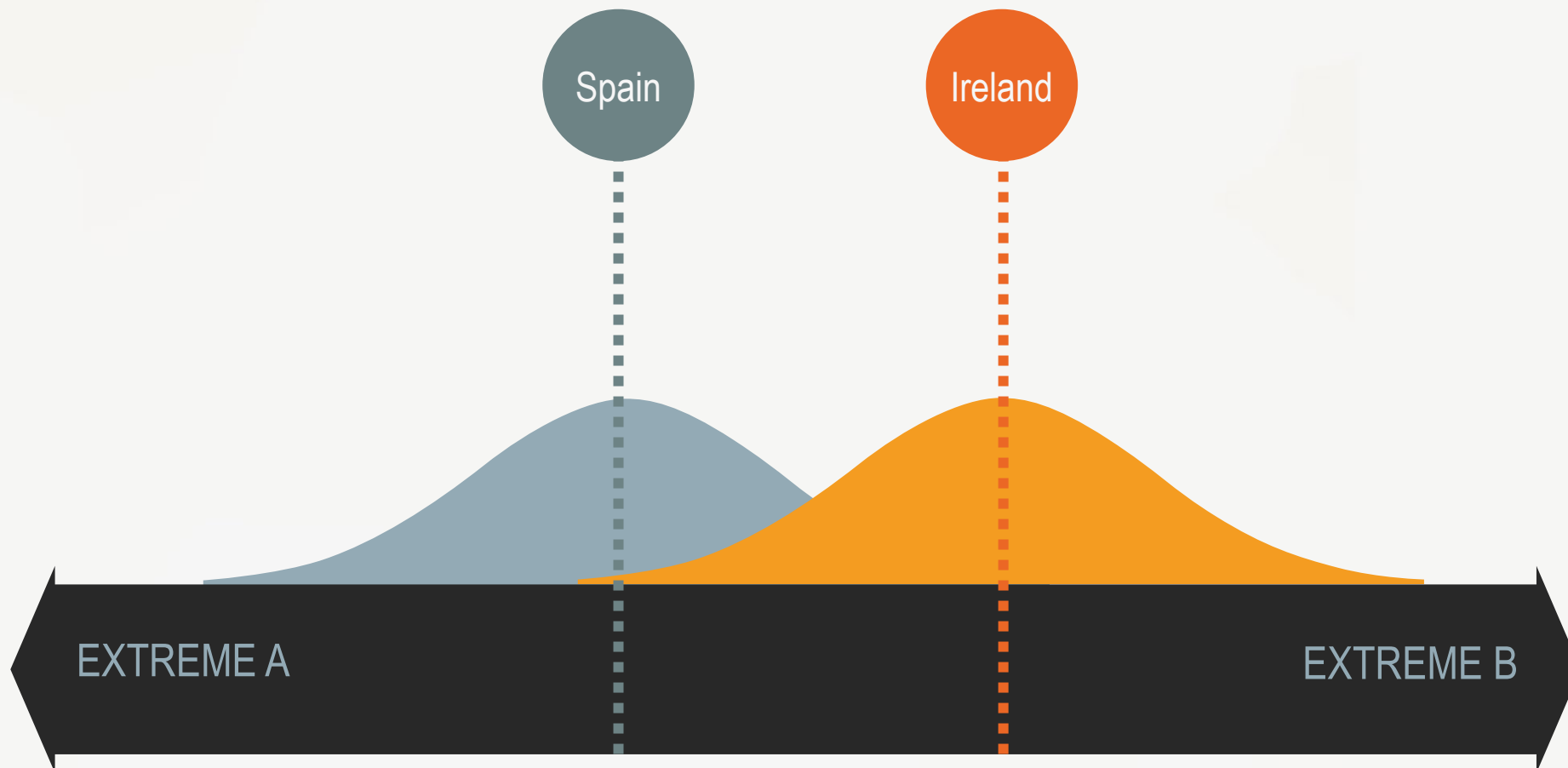
DK Denmark

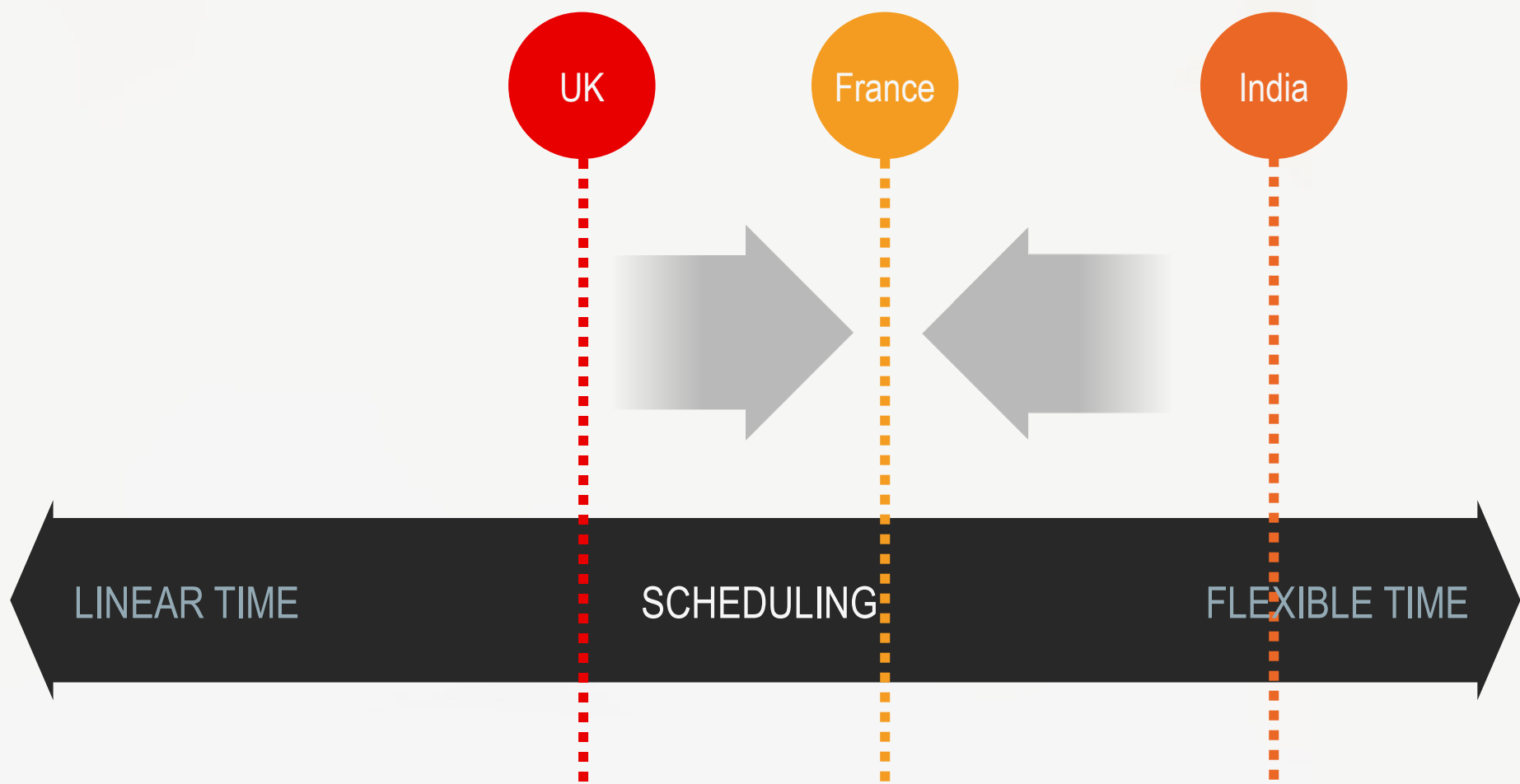
UK UK

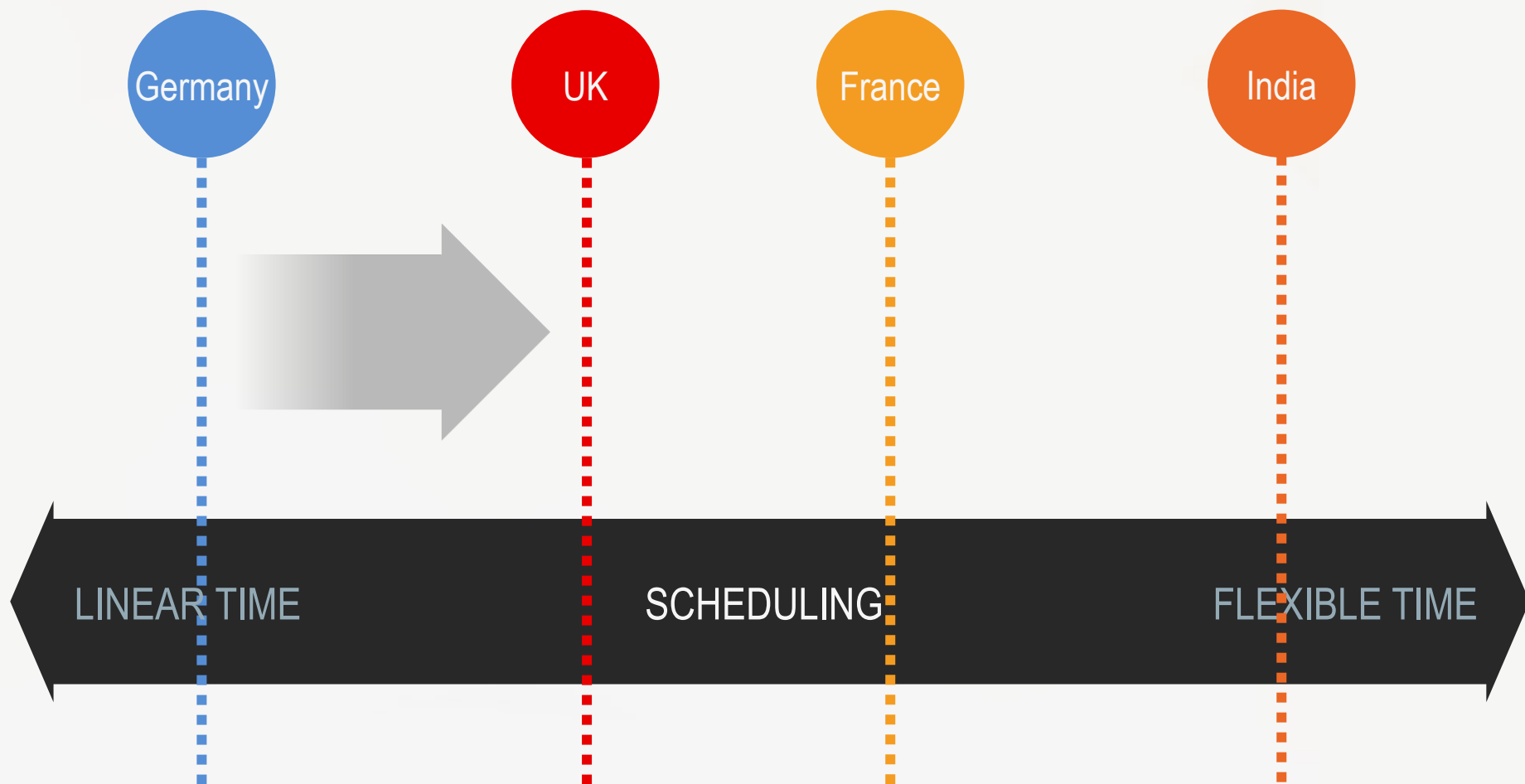


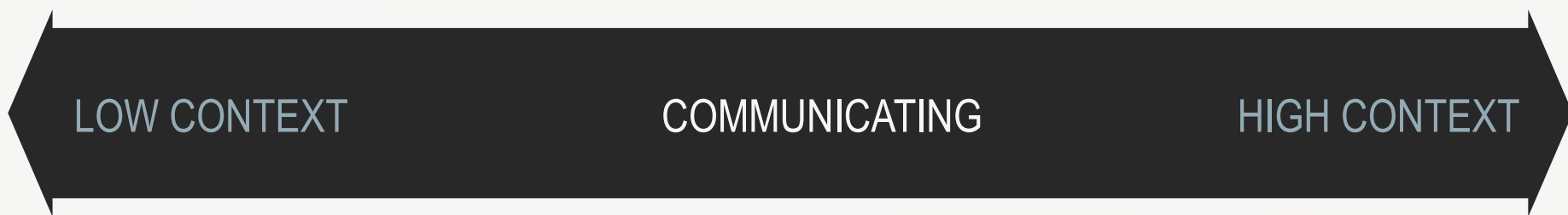
NL Netherlands BE Belgium

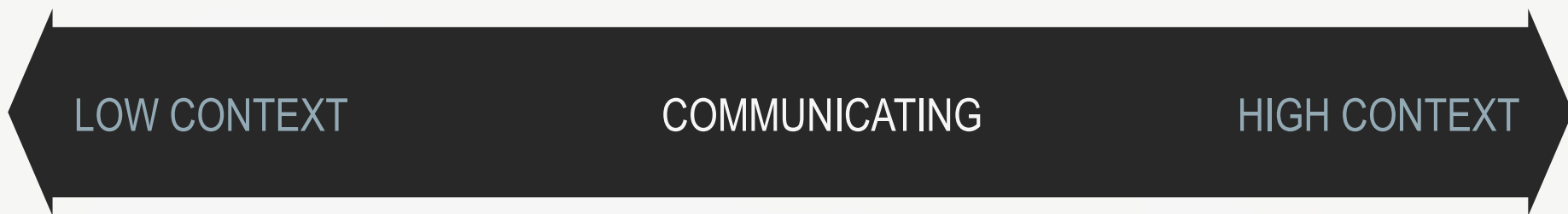






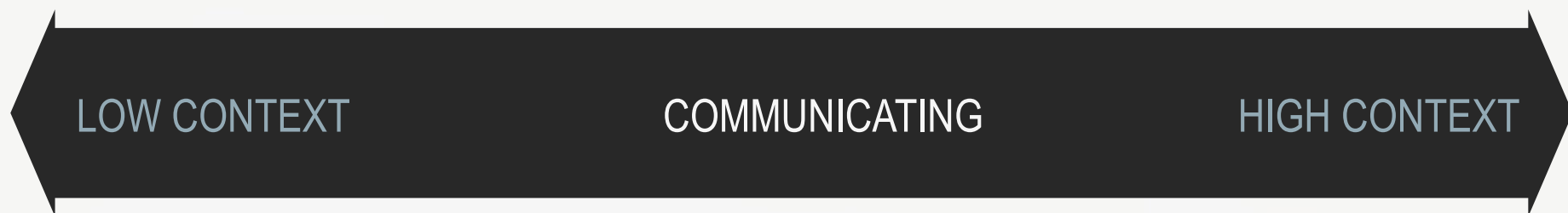






Explicit
Simple
Clear

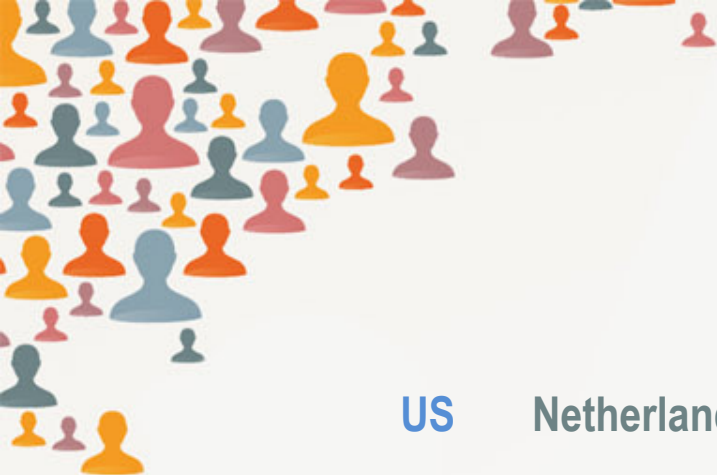




Explicit
Simple
Clear

Implicit
Layered
Nuanced





US	Netherlands	UK	Austria	Spain	France	Trinidad	Saudi		
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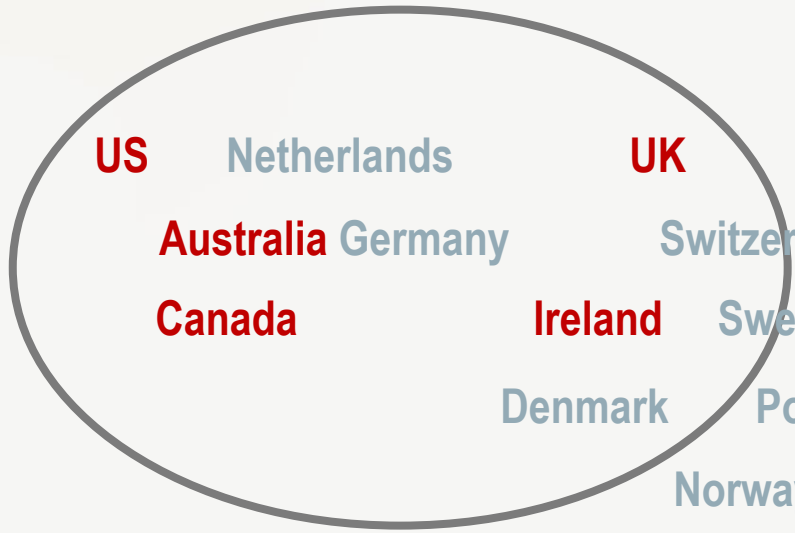
COMMUNICATING

HIGH CONTEXT

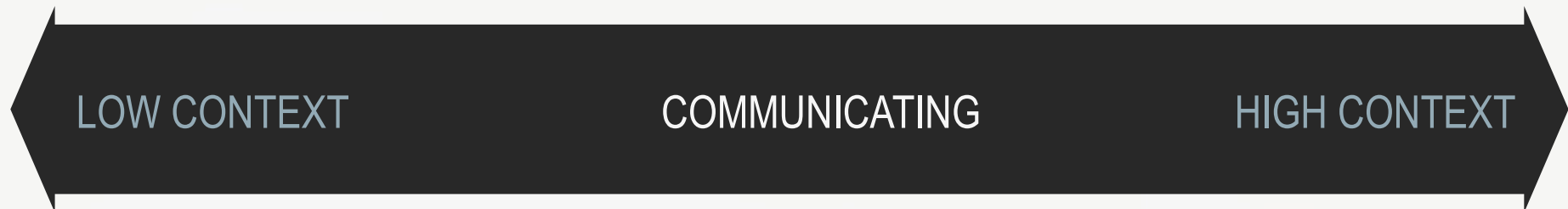
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COMMUNICATING

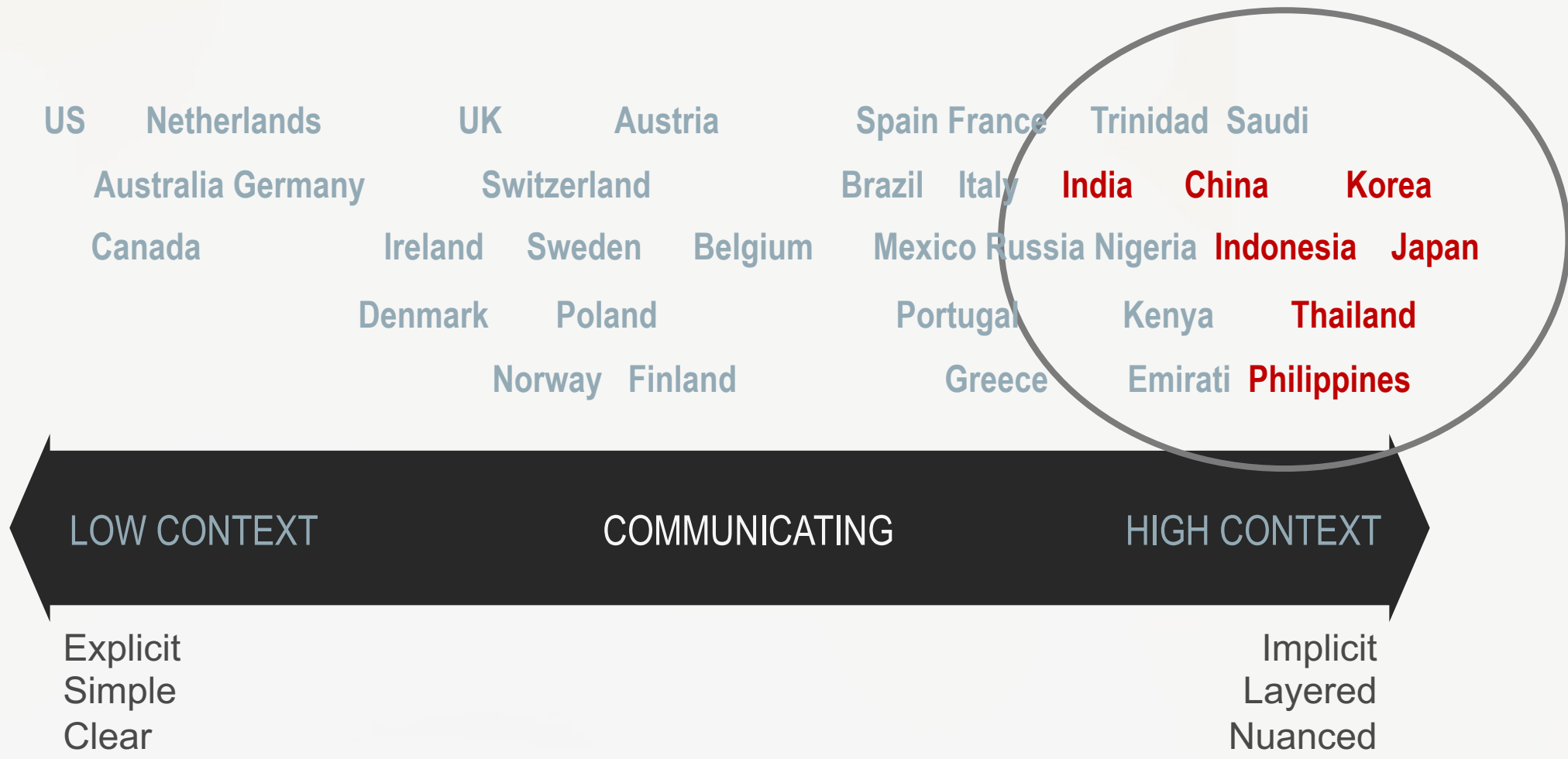
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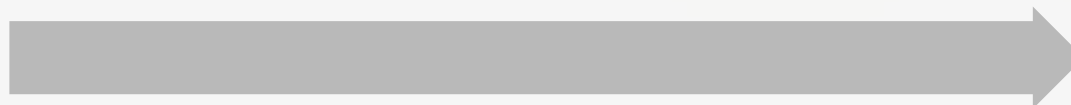
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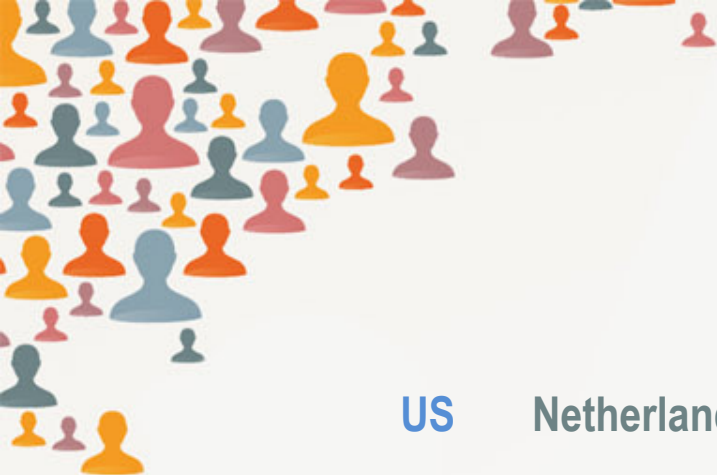
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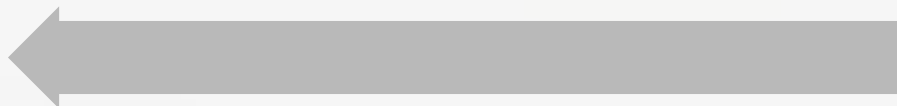
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Chat in your answer

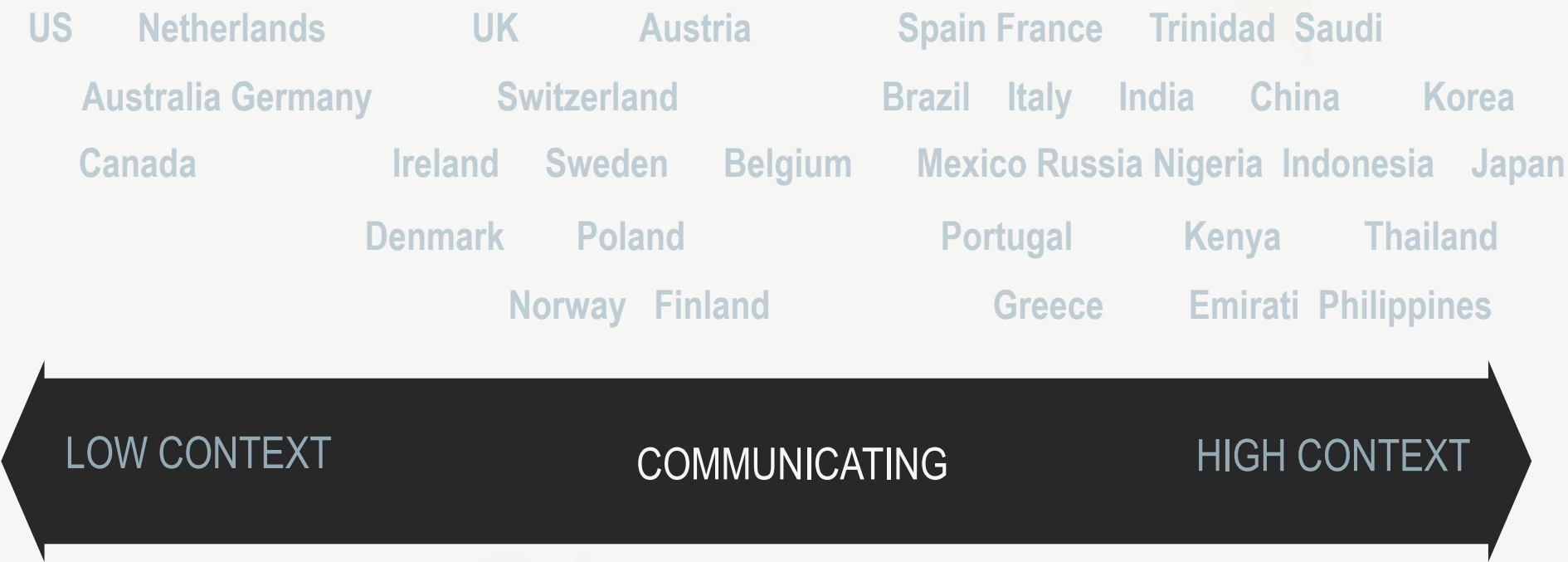


Historically what would have led the US to be the lowest context culture in the world and Japan the highest?



Chat in your answer: Is miscommunication most likely between:

- A) A Low Context Culture and another Low Context Culture
- B) A Low Context Culture and a High Context Culture
- C) A High Context Culture and another High Context Culture



Communicating conclusions



Multi-cultural teams benefit from **low context processes**.



With low context people be **as explicit as possible**. Put it in writing. Repeat key points.



With high context people ask clarifying questions and work on **increasing their ability to “read the air”**.



DIRECT NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

INDIRECT NEGATIVE FEEDBACK





Israel	Germany	Swiss	Italy	USA	UK	Chile	Turkey	Saudi	Japan
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INDIRECT NEGATIVE FEEDBACK





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DIRECT NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

INDIRECT NEGATIVE FEEDBACK





Up-graders:	Down-graders:
Definitely	Sort of
Very	Kind of
Certainly	Maybe
Clearly	Pretty Much
In Fact	I Guess





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INDIRECT NEGATIVE FEEDBACK





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DIRECT NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

INDIRECT NEGATIVE FEEDBACK





Netherlands
Germany

LOW CONTEXT

HIGH CONTEXT

Netherlands
Germany

DIRECT NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

INDIRECT NEGATIVE FEEDBACK





France
Russia



Russia France





We had 2 weeks of meetings in China to explore a JV. At first we had difficulty getting the information we needed. We felt our Chinese counterparts were not willing to cooperate.

After the first week we discussed our frustrations with our Chinese consultant. The consultant told us our approach was wrong. We were going too fast. We argued back that we had been very detailed, open, and patient.

The consultant said “It is not a problem of how you are approaching them from a business perspective but of the relationship perspective. You are not going to get what you want unless you develop “Guanxi” with them.”

Reflection question:

What does the Chinese consultant mean?

What steps do you suggest the British team take to improve their chances of success?



We then took the consultants advice and decided to invite the Chinese counterparts for a dinner over the weekend with the presence of various hierarchical levels from their organization. It was an excellent dinner during which we had time to socialize.

We toasted several times in sign of our respect for them. In addition we emphasized how glad we were to be there with them and to begin a long term relationship.

We re-started the meetings the following Monday and the Chinese willingness to cooperate had changed completely. They were now very enthusiastic and we began to work well as a team. We were then able to satisfactorily accomplish our work week two.



US Netherlands UK Switzerland France Russia Japan China Saudi
Germany Australia Poland Belgium Spain Italy Brazil Malaysia Turkey
Canada Denmark Sweden Ireland Portugal Mexico Egypt Nigeria
Finland Austria Greece Trinidad India Korea

TASK-BASED

TRUSTING

RELATIONSHIP-BASED



US Netherlands UK Switzerland France Russia Japan China Saudi
Germany Australia Poland Belgium Spain Italy Brazil Malaysia Turkey
Canada Denmark Sweden Ireland Portugal Mexico Egypt Nigeria
Finland Austria Greece Trinidad India Korea

TASK-BASED

TRUSTING

RELATIONSHIP-BASED



Trusting conclusions

When working with relationship-based cultures:

- Invest significantly more time building relationships when working globally.
- Practice exposing yourself more than you are used to and working on blending your personal self with your professional self.
- Use more non-work talk to pad your emails and telephone calls.

When working with task-based cultures:

- Get down to business. Try shorter lunches, less non-work-related talk, get down to business
- Or explain why you want to invest the time – (“in order for me to work with someone well I need to spend time to know them. In Brazil we do this by. . .”).



Japan Thailand

Korea

Finland

Malaysia

China Russia

Zimbabwe

Sweden

Norway

Belgium

Brazil

UK Ireland

Denmark

India

Mexico

Italy US

Germany

Spain

France

Portugal






Greece

HIGH COMFORT WITH SILENCE

LOW COMFORT WITH SILENCE





A	  
B	 








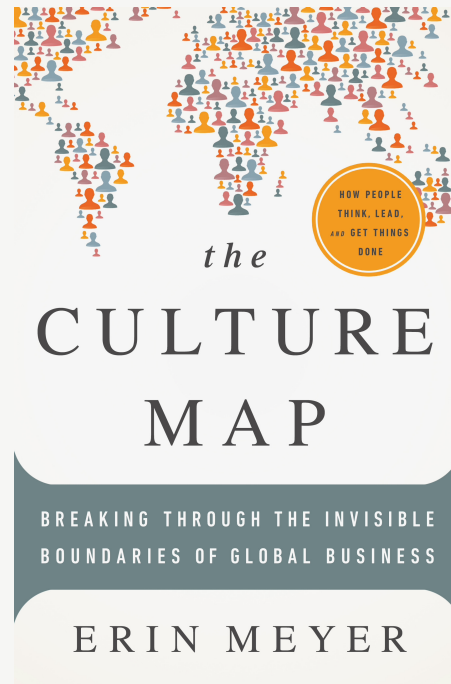
A B	
A B	





A B	
A B	
A B	





Link to Culture Mapping tool:

<https://tinyurl.com/yt3myhsx>