

Working across cultures from the Scandinavian-Polish perspective  
**SPCC & ExpatHouse Business Culture Survey 2013**

Executive coaching  
Team building  
Cross-cultural integration

'Change is inevitable but personal growth is your choice.'



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# Business Culture Survey 2013

## Background Information

- Target group: SPCC members
- Survey time: 19.11.2012 – 26.1.2013
- 54 SPCC-member respondents from Poland and the Scandinavian countries
- A similar survey was conducted in 2004. 64 respondents from SPCC with similar backgrounds.

## Background information

Nationality	n	%
Polish	29	54 %
Swedish	9	17 %
Finnish	8	15 %
Danish	7	13 %
Norwegian *	1	2 %
Total	54	100 %

Position in the company	n	%
Management	13	68 %
Specialist	6	32 %
Assistant	0	0 %
Other	0	0 %
Total	19	100 %

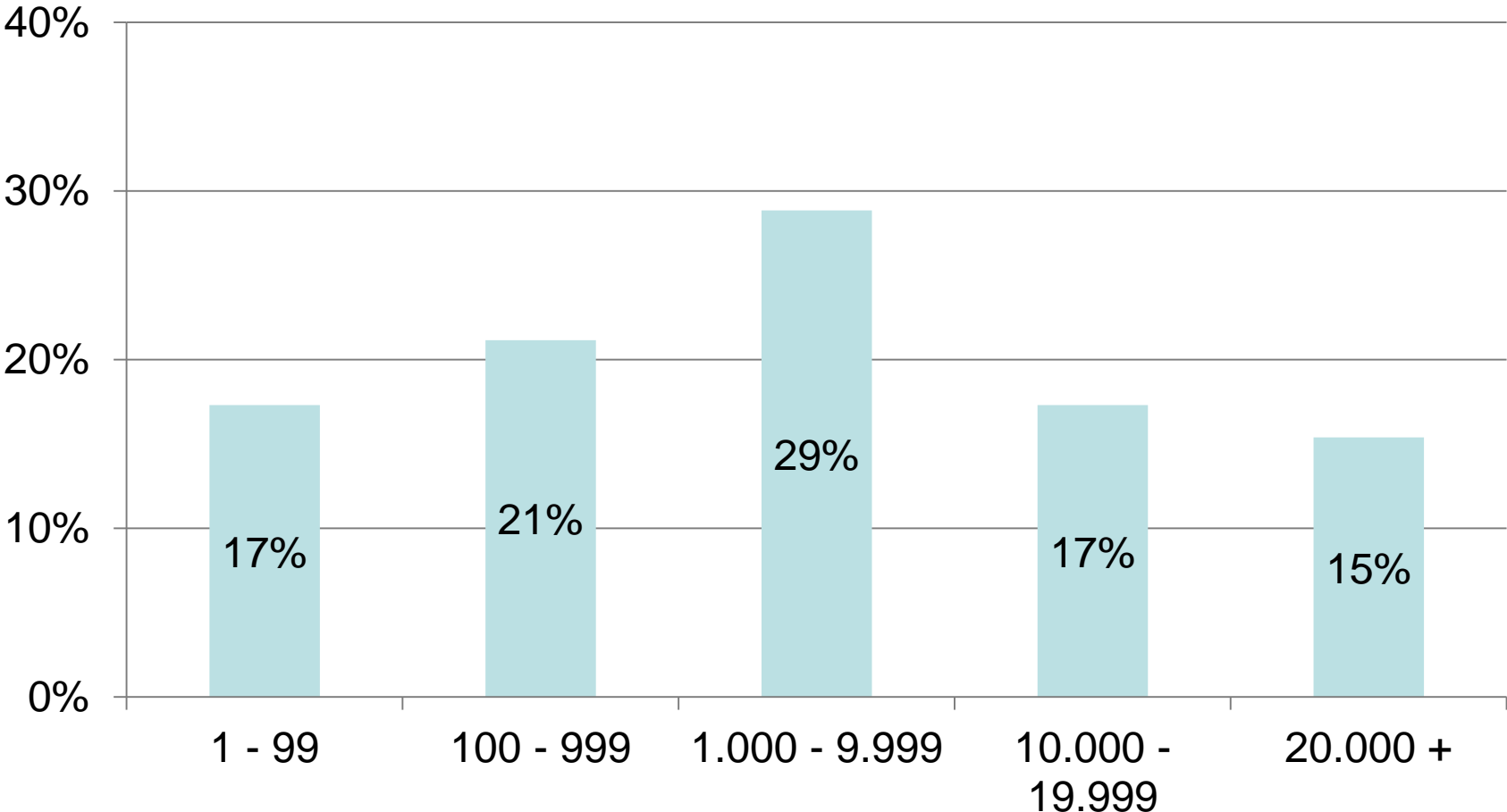
\*Norwegians excluded in presentation because of only one response.

## Background information

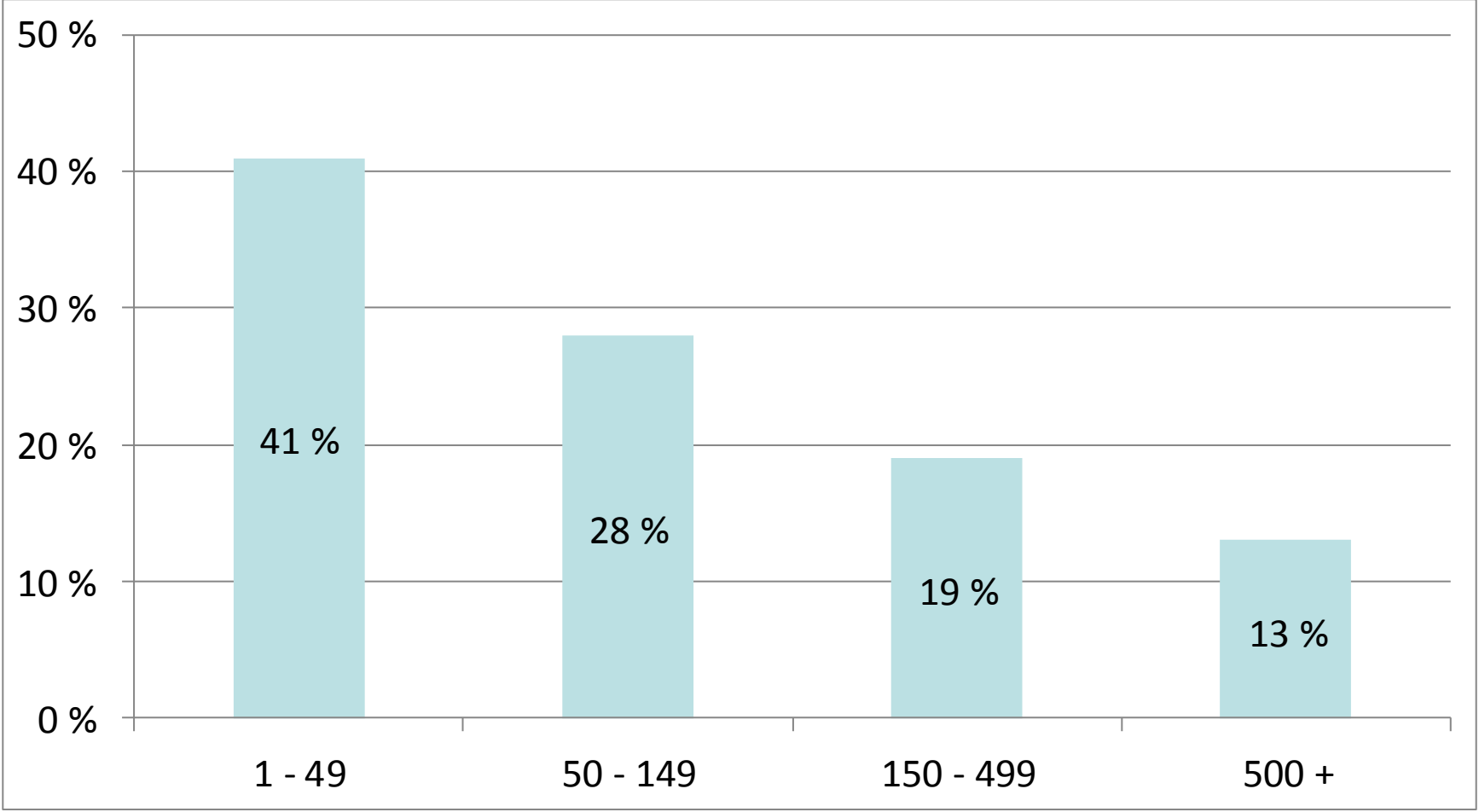
Do you currently live in Poland?	n	%
Yes	47	<b>90 %</b>
No	5	10 %
Total	52	100 %

If no, how often do you go on business trips to Poland?	n	%
weekly	2	33 %
monthly	3	50 %
more seldom	1	17 %
Total	6	100 %

# Number of personnel at your company worldwide? (n52)



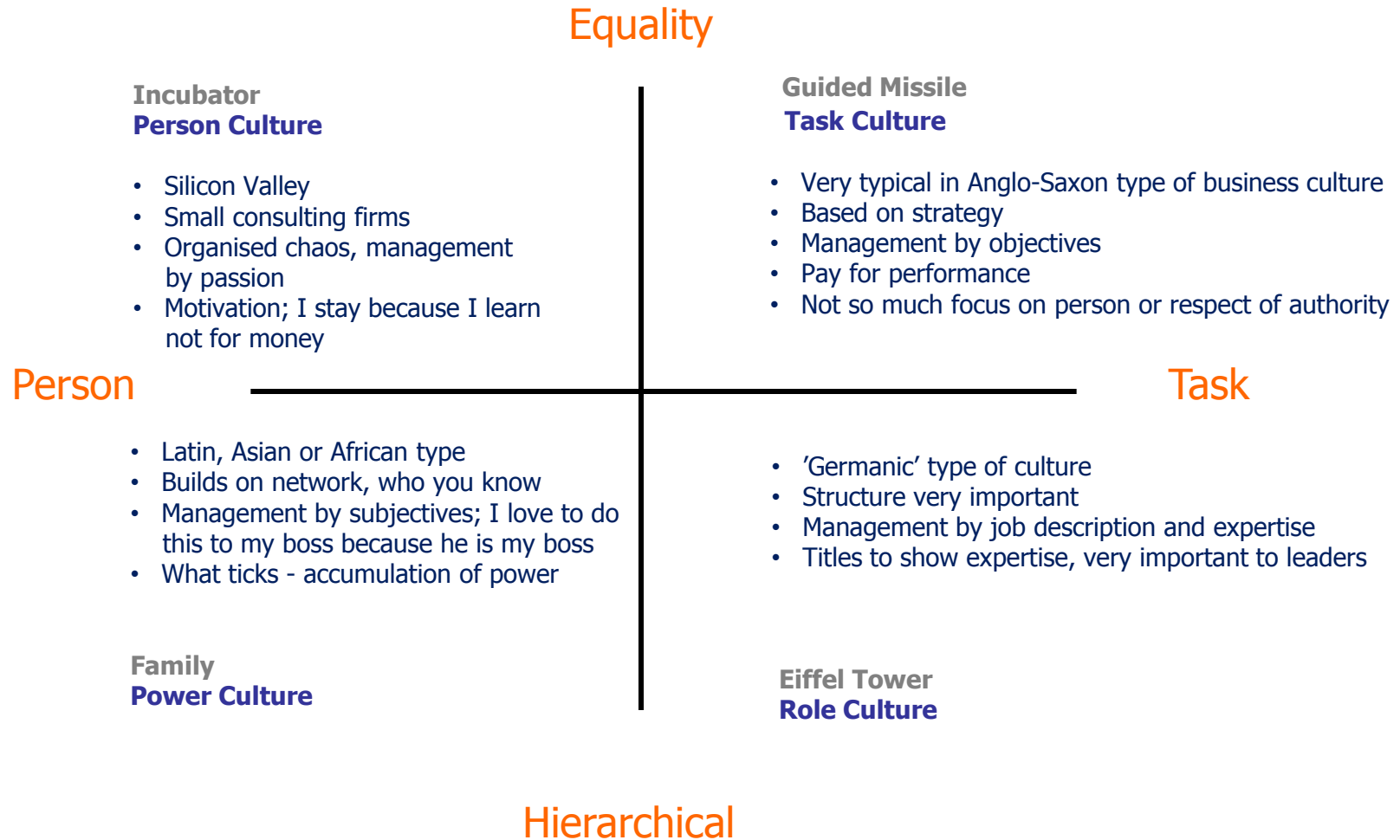
# Number of personnel in Poland? (n54)



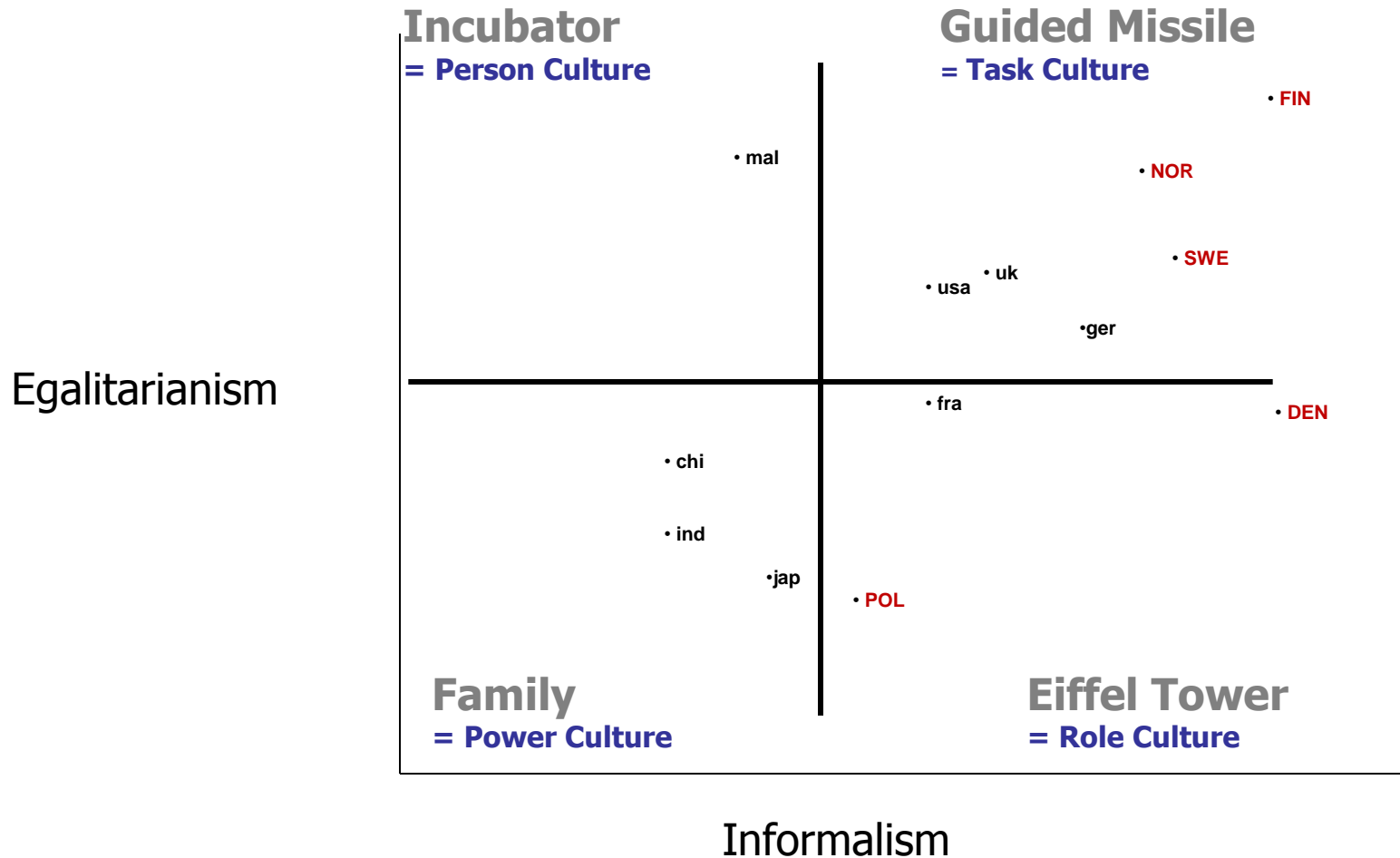
**What kind of corporate culture does your company have?  
Does it override national cultures or support them?**



# Corporate cultures



# Corporate cultures



# Interaction between Scandinavians and Poles

## OPINIONS OF

	<b>Danes</b>	<b>Finns</b>	<b>Poles</b>	<b>Swedes</b>
<b>Danes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Result and future orientated</li> <li>- Open minded</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Outgoing</li> <li>- Happy and friendly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quick in making decisions</li> <li>- Hierarchical</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Negotiators</li> <li>- Business orientated</li> </ul>
<b>Finns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quiet and introvert</li> <li>- Skilled and result focused</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promise keeping</li> <li>- Hard workers</li> <li>- Shy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Long-term orientated</li> <li>- Keep their promises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Honest</li> <li>- Tough in doing business</li> </ul>
<b>Poles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Demanding</li> <li>- Short-term oriented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Last minute acting</li> <li>- Hard workers but irresponsible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Goal orientated</li> <li>- Disorganized</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quick decisions</li> <li>- Hard working</li> </ul>
<b>Swedes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organized</li> <li>- Slow decision making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Slow decision makers</li> <li>- Open minded</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meet and discuss, not willing to make decisions</li> <li>- Social</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Structured and professional</li> <li>- Slow decision making</li> </ul>

*“ Rather kind, but sometimes treating others with sarcasm or humor which is not understandable” (excerpt from study)”*

- Result oriented
- Open minded & talkative
- Good negotiators
- Extrovert, but hard to get close to
- Casual, but can sometimes come out arrogant

*“Trying to deal with business instead of people” (excerpt)*

- Analytical and long term oriented
- Honest and hard working
- Tough to read “between the lines”
- Direct, strict and task oriented
- Not so talkative

# Norwegians

*“Relaxed, leave home early 😊”* (excerpt)

- Long term orientated
- Introvert & nationalistic
- Sometimes naive in doing business
- Good at separating business and private life
- Relaxed

*“They think they are the best, but don’t think it’s ok to say it out loud” (excerpt)*

- Social and open-minded
- Long decision making process
- Structured and detailed planning
- Sometimes overconfident; looking through own glasses, not local business reality
- Trustful and polite

*“Hard working, title and hierarchy focused”* (excerpt)

- Short-term oriented, short-term profit focus
- Quick decisions, ambitious and dynamic
- Hierarchical
  - Directors know their position
  - Employees can be afraid of management
- **Scandinavians state**; “more skilled people have emerged in the Polish business environment in the recent 5 years” , “Young generation positive, educated and hard-working” , “language skills are good nowadays”;



## Cultural interaction challenges between Scandinavians?

Have you identified any challenges in cultural interaction between Scandinavians? (n51)	n	%
Yes	16	31 %
No	35	69 %

Yes: If yes; please give an example;

- Decision-making progress and time to decisions
- History influences the interaction between Scandinavians
- Tendency to stay within their own circles

## Cultural clashes between Scandinavian and Polish business culture

Have you experienced cultural clashes between the Scandinavian and the Polish business culture? (n47)	n	%
Yes	25	53 %
No	22	47 %

Yes: If yes; please give an example;

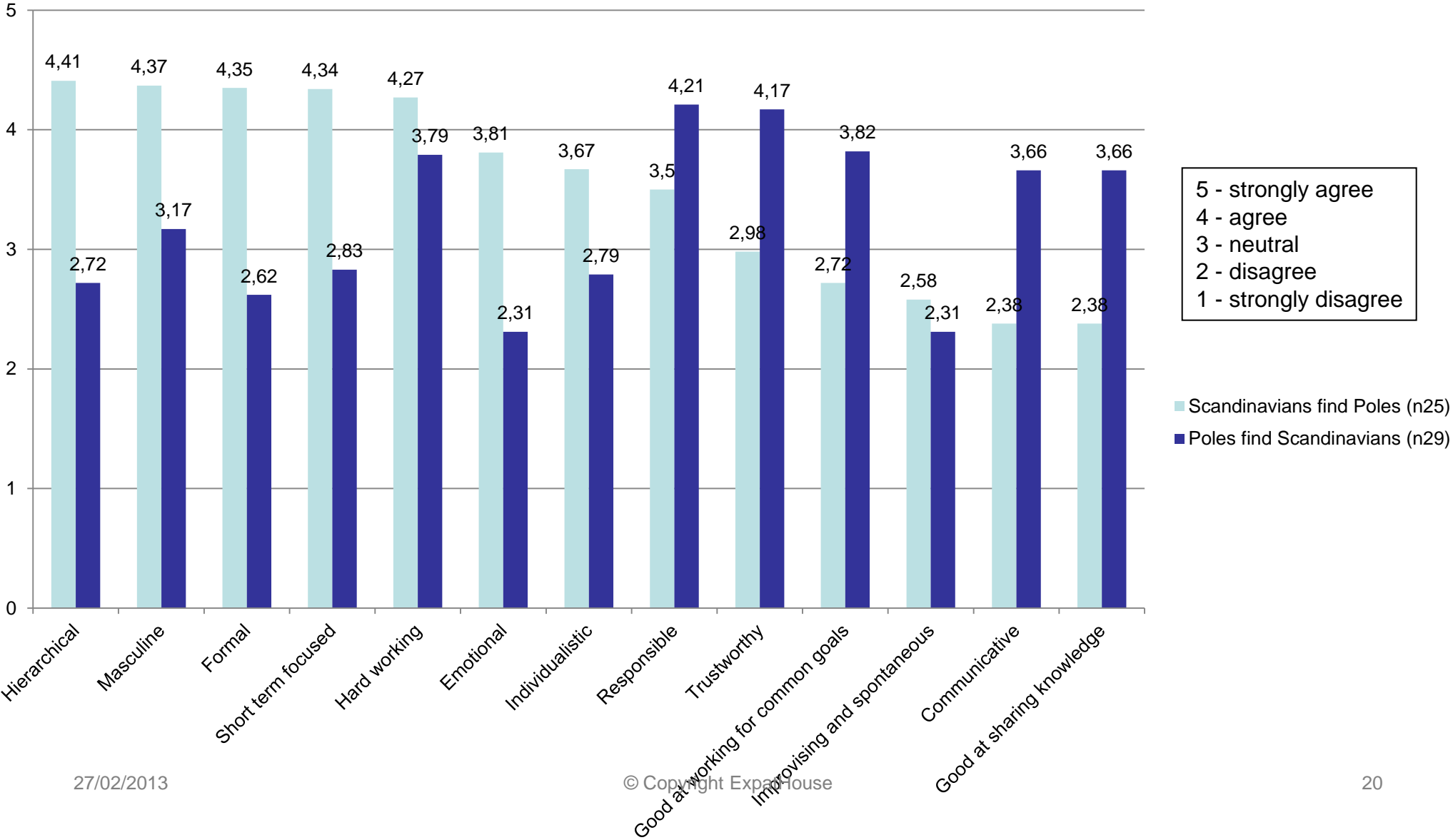
- Informal vs. formal business culture
- Hierarchy and perception of authority
- Degree of structure, organization and planning
- Masculine vs. feminine business culture
- Different perspective on quality – choosing accomplishing a task over quality
- (Polish think) Scandinavians should respect the Polish culture more when doing business in Poland

## Co-operation between headquarters and local Polish unit

n(52)	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Average
Company headquarters understand the Polish business environment?	4 %	<b>33 %</b>	<b>33 %</b>	<b>29 %</b>	2 %	<b>3,1</b>
The local Polish business unit have sufficient decision making power?	12 %	<b>58 %</b>	12 %	15 %	4 %	<b>3,6</b>
Cooperation between headquarters and the Polish local unit is productive	12 %	<b>58 %</b>	21 %	8 %	2 %	<b>3,7</b>

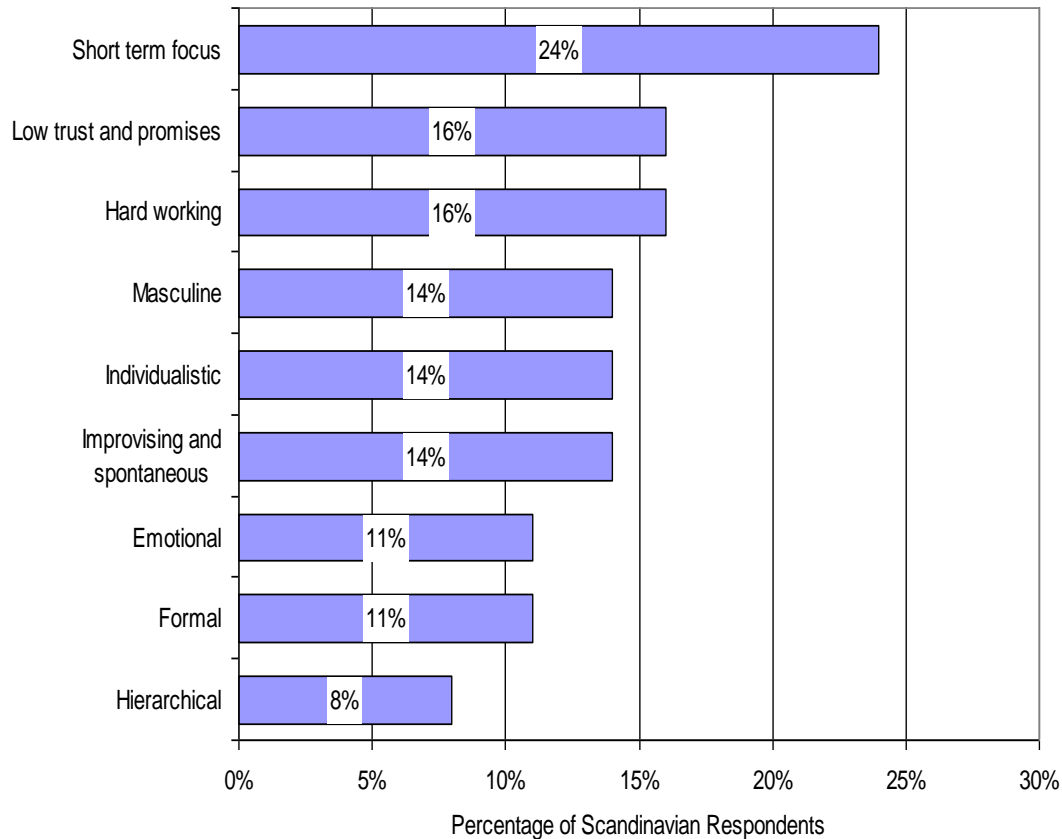
5 - strongly agree  
4 - agree  
3 - neutral  
2 - disagree  
1 - strongly disagree

# Scandinavians find Poles / Poles find Scandinavians



# Scandinavians find Poles 2004

Scandinavians find Poles

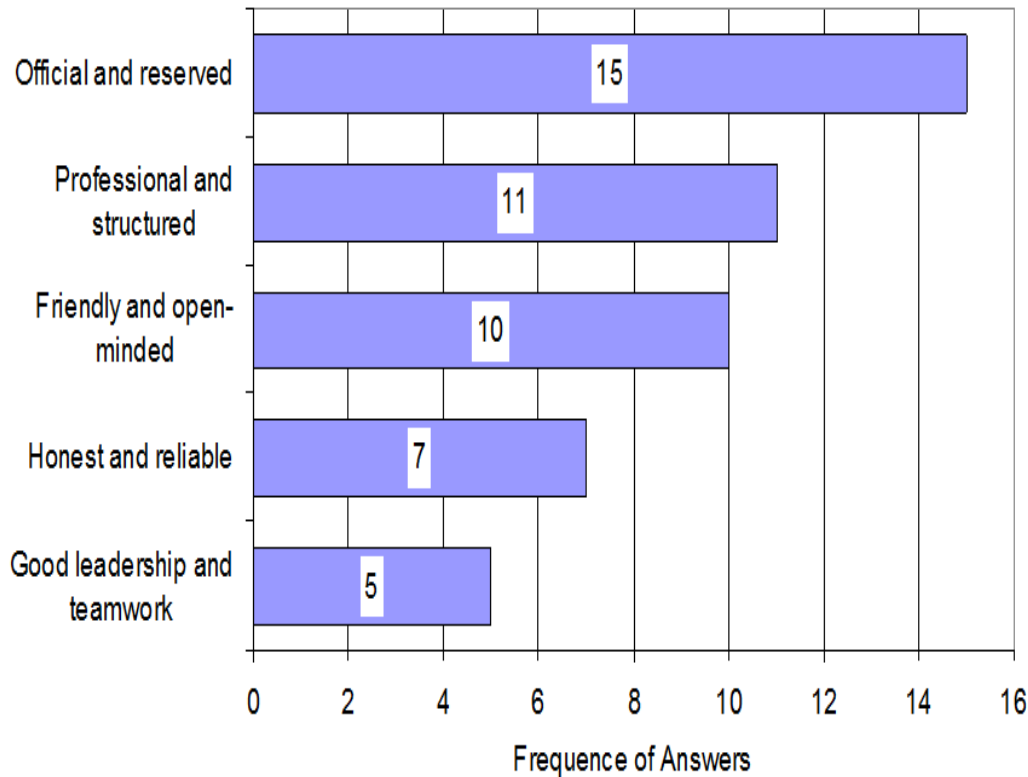


## Conclusions 2004 vs. 2013 survey

- The same themes emerge; Short term focused, masculine and hard working
- The perception of Polish hierarchy and degree of formality has risen since 2004
- Trust is not as big an issue in 2013 as 2004, Scandinavians trust Poles a bit more.

# Poles find Scandinavians 2004

Poles find Scandinavians



## Conclusions 2004 vs. 2013 survey

- Poles do not find Scandinavians as formal, official and reserved in the 2013 survey, as they did in 2004.
- Poles find Scandinavians trustworthy, structured and good at sharing knowledge in teamwork as they did in 2004.
- Poles still find Scandinavians professional and structured with detailed long-term planning.

# Overall conclusions

- Scandinavians think the Polish business environment and Polish business people have developed a lot during the past 9 years.
- Scandinavian business culture and Scandinavians' perception of one another is stable and deeply rooted in culture and history.
- Awareness of cultural issues affecting business has increased

