



# THE CULTURE MAP:

Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business



Erin Meyer



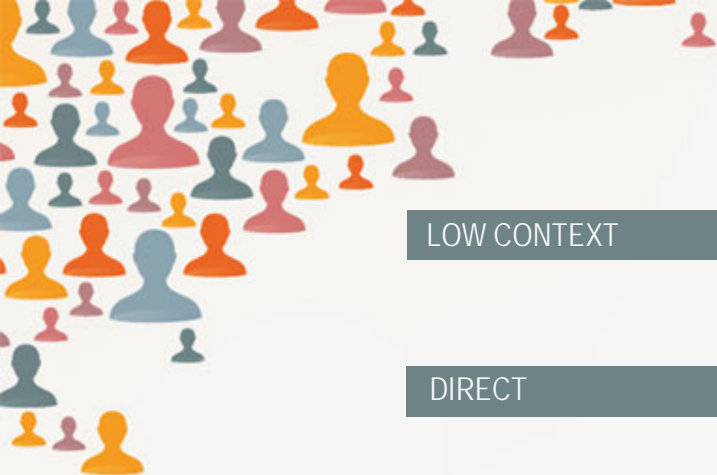
ErinMeyerInsead



erin.meyer@insead.edu

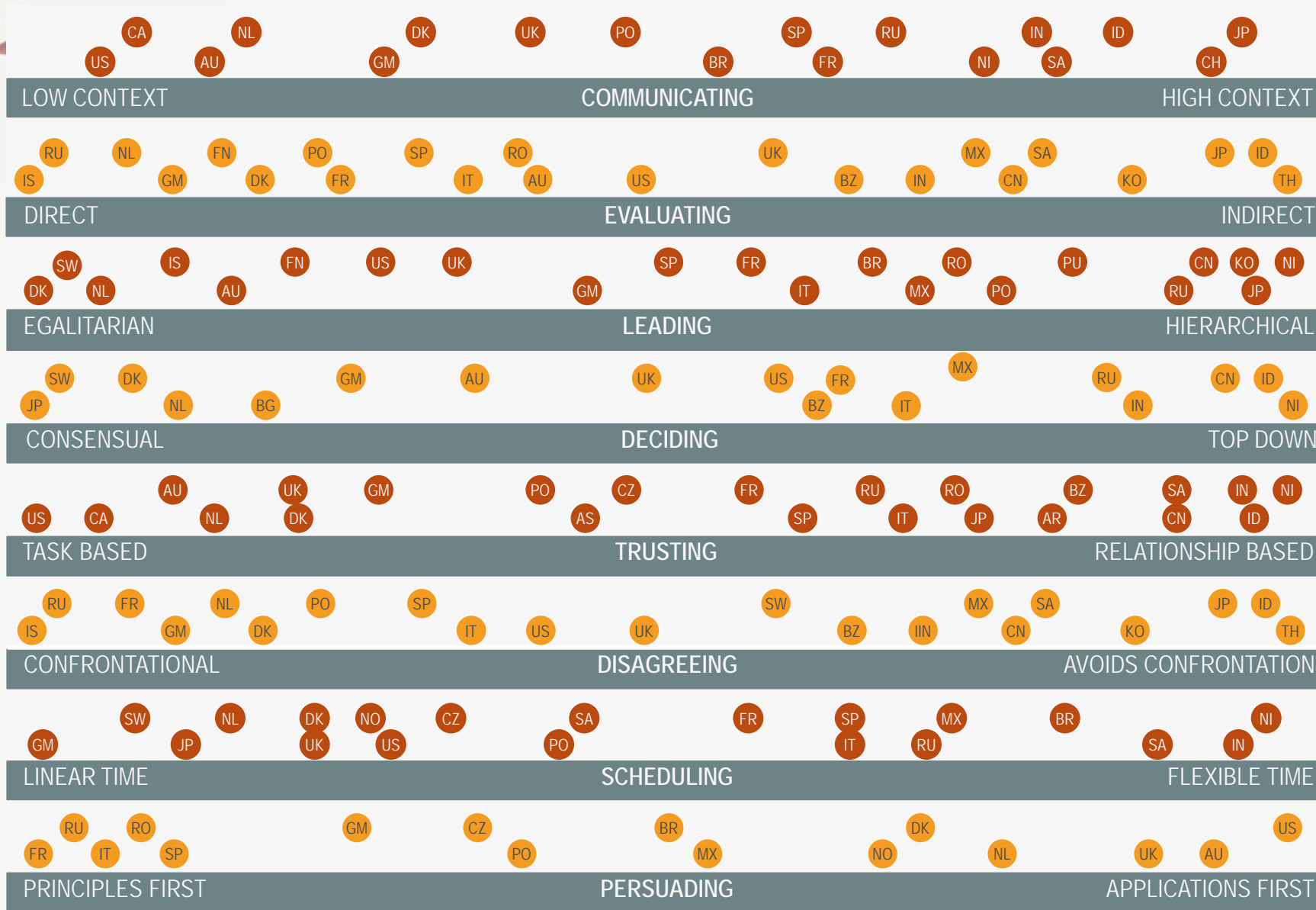


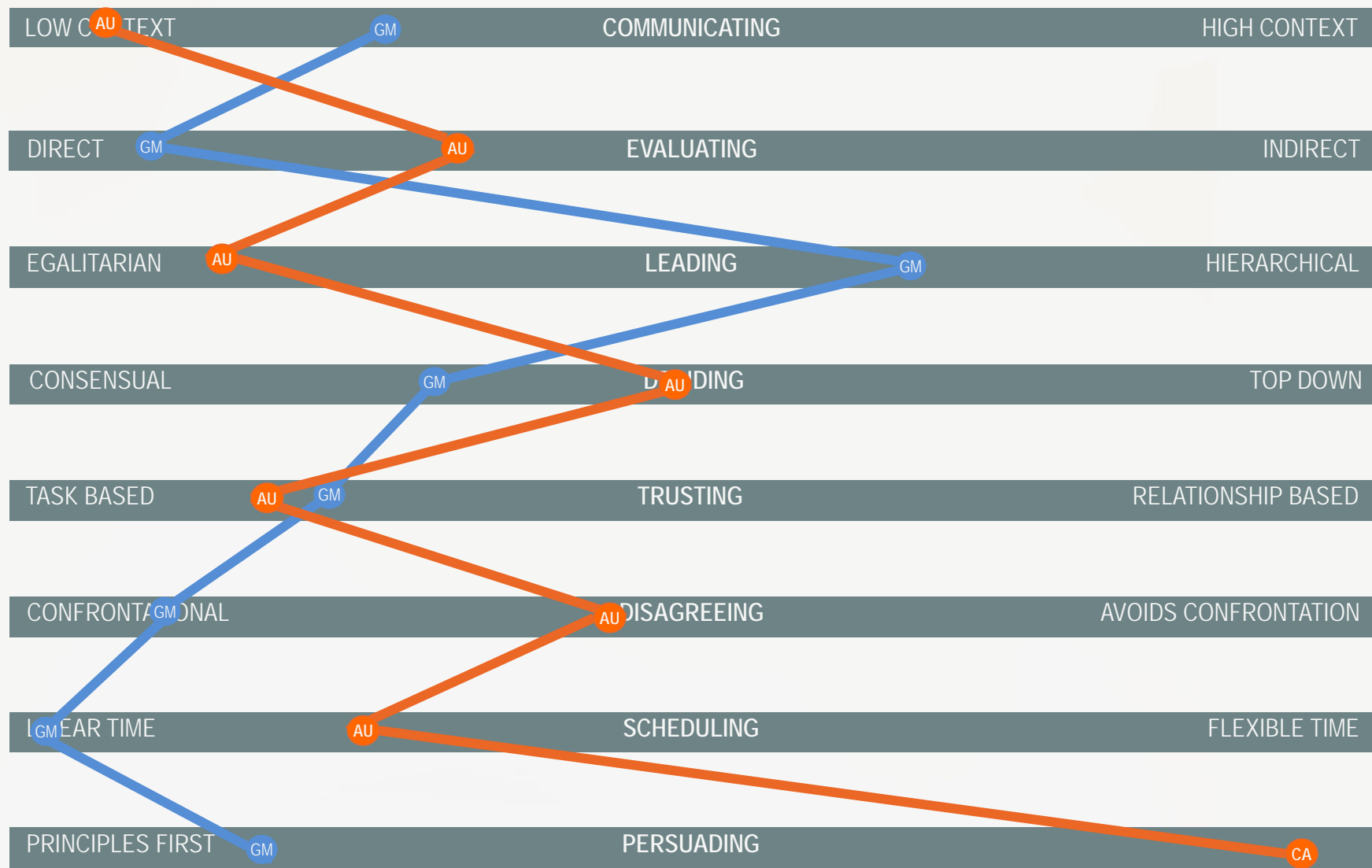
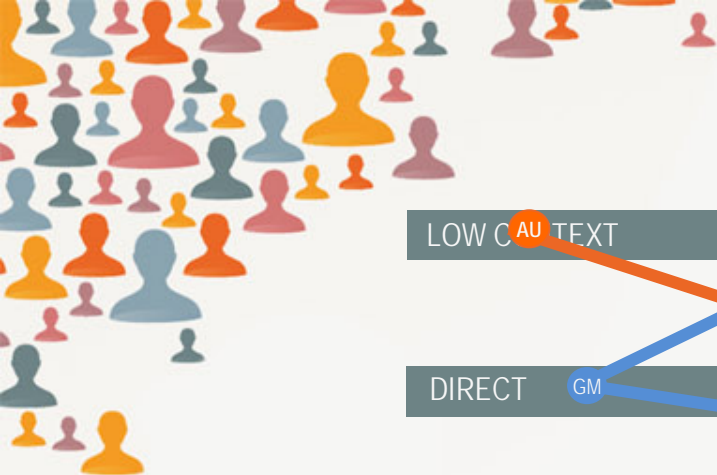
www.erinmeyer.com



LOW CONTEXT	COMMUNICATING	HIGH CONTEXT
DIRECT	EVALUATING	INDIRECT
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

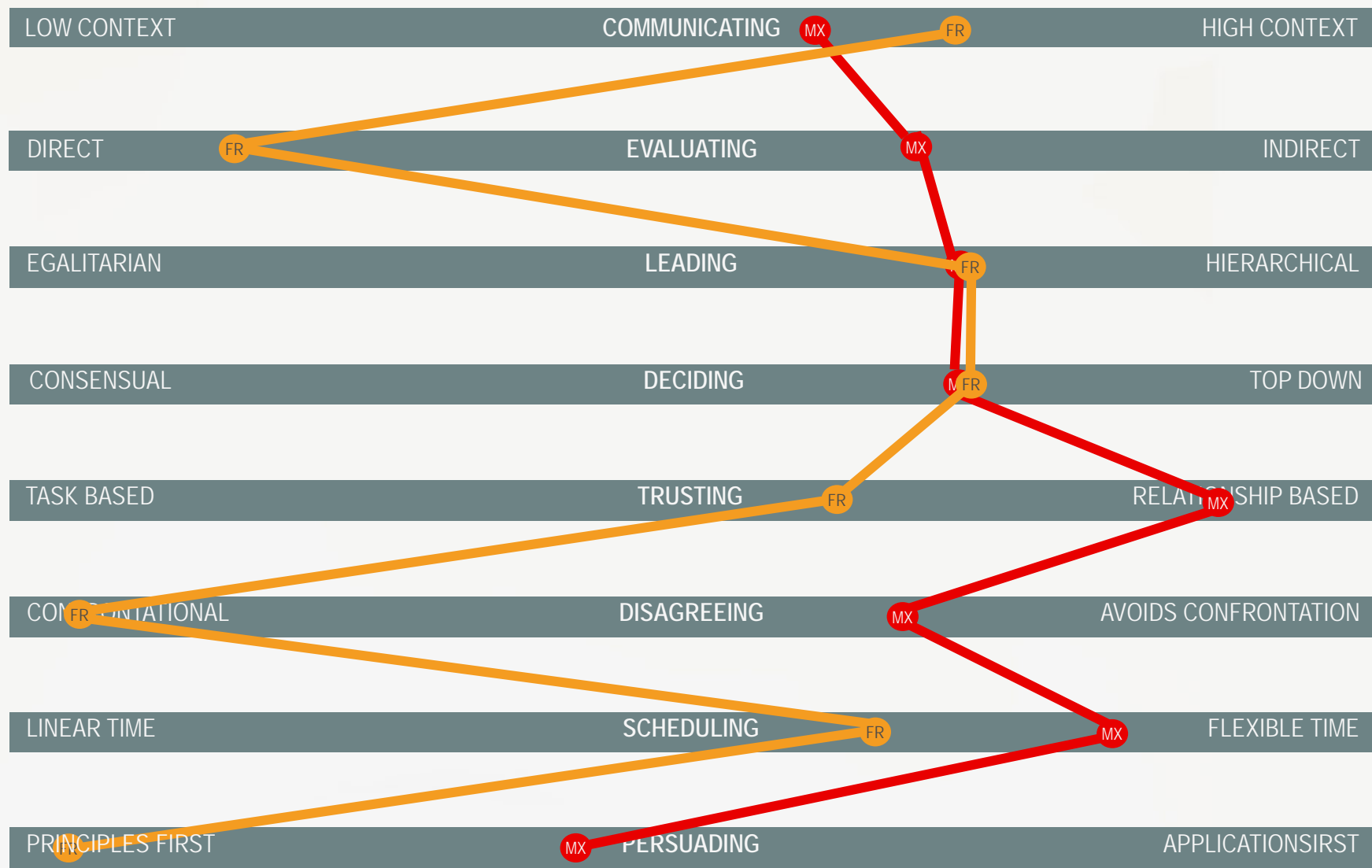
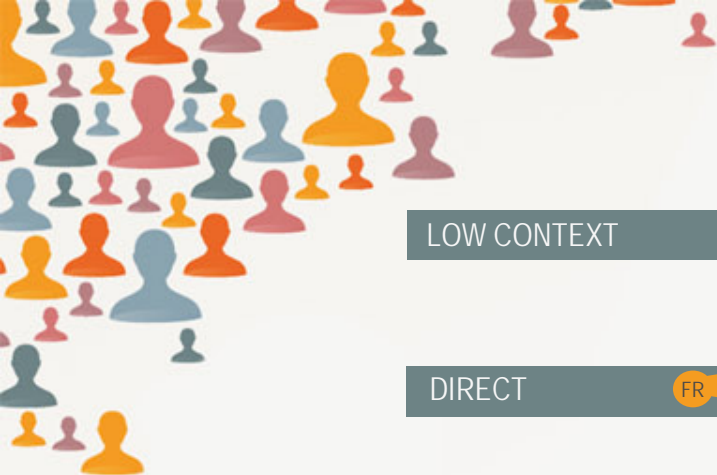






GM Germany AU Australia

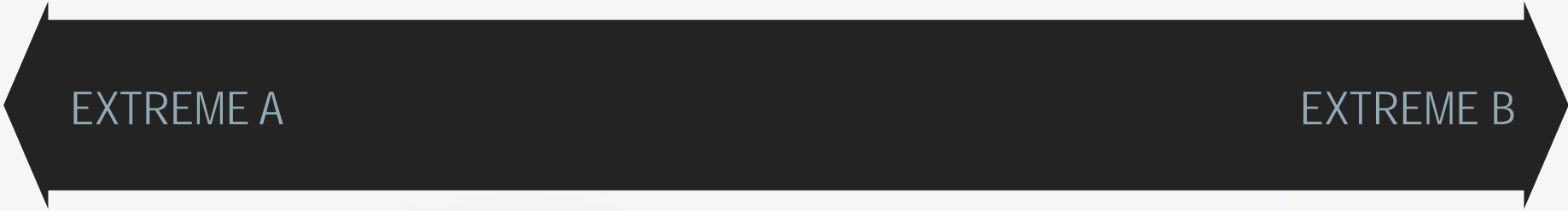




FR France

MX Mexico

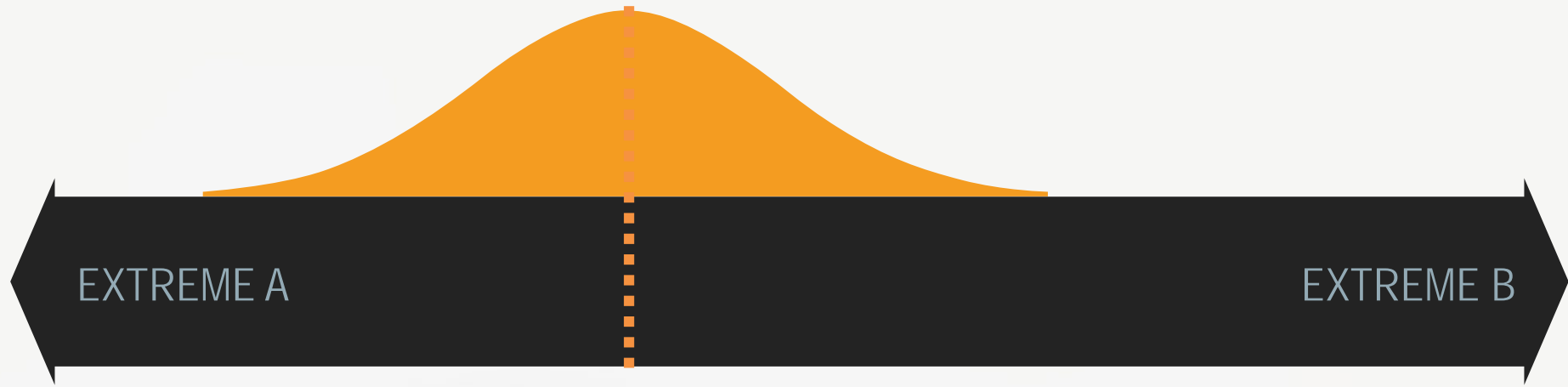








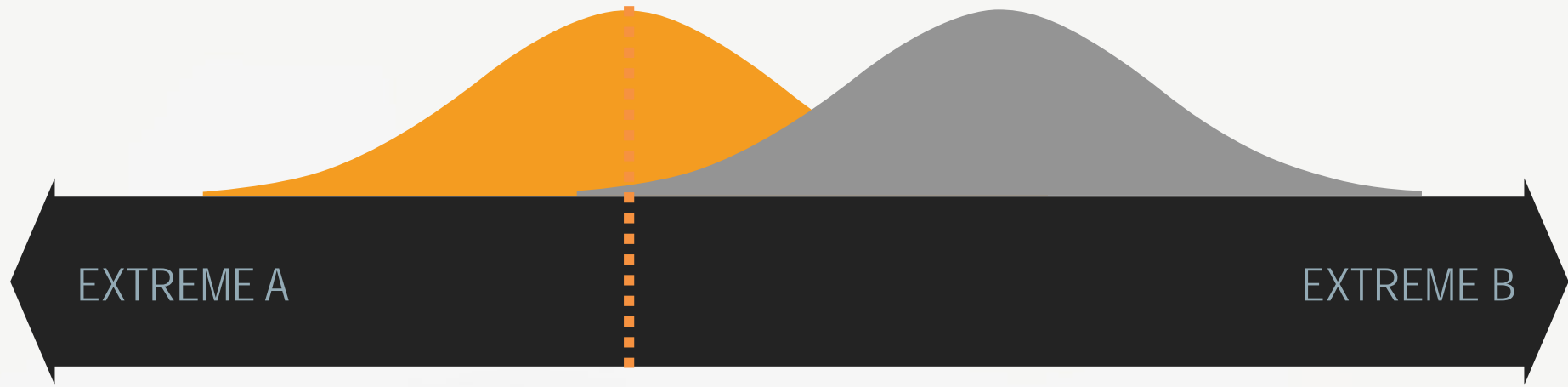
Ireland

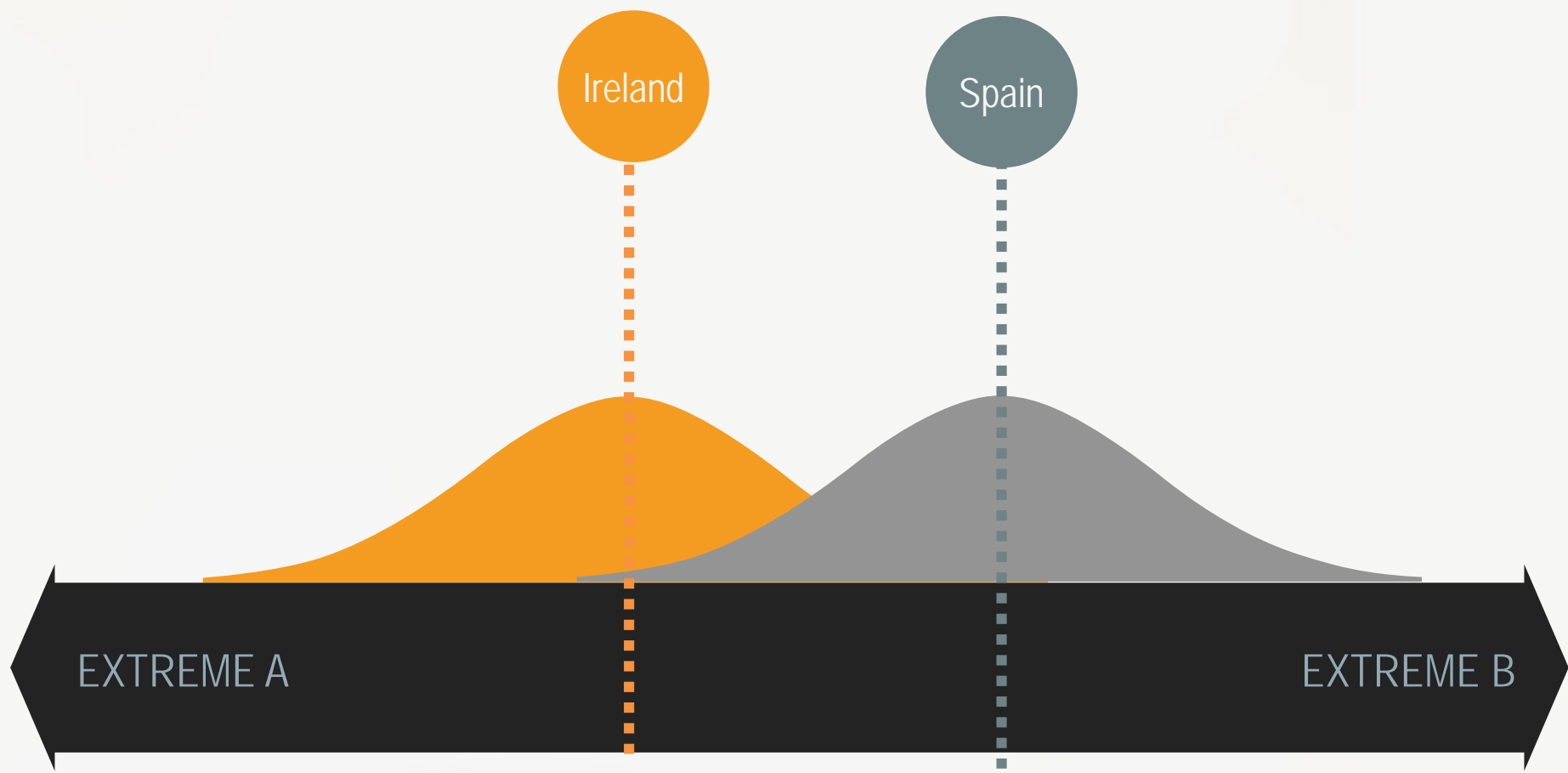






Ireland



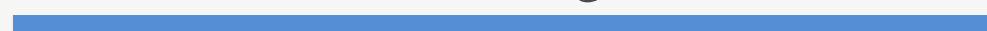




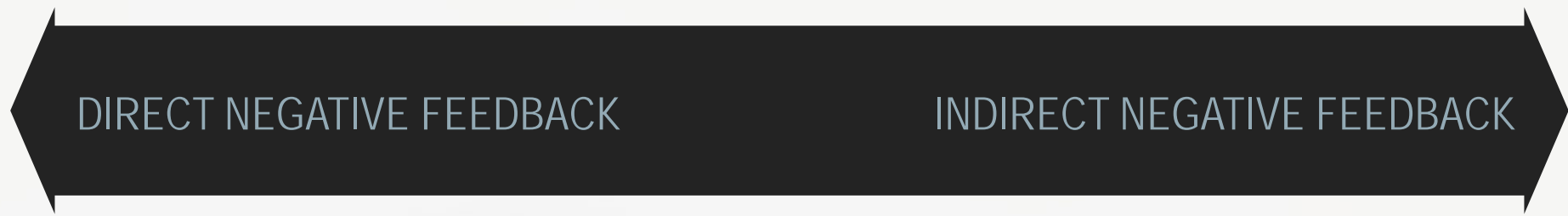
Danish Range

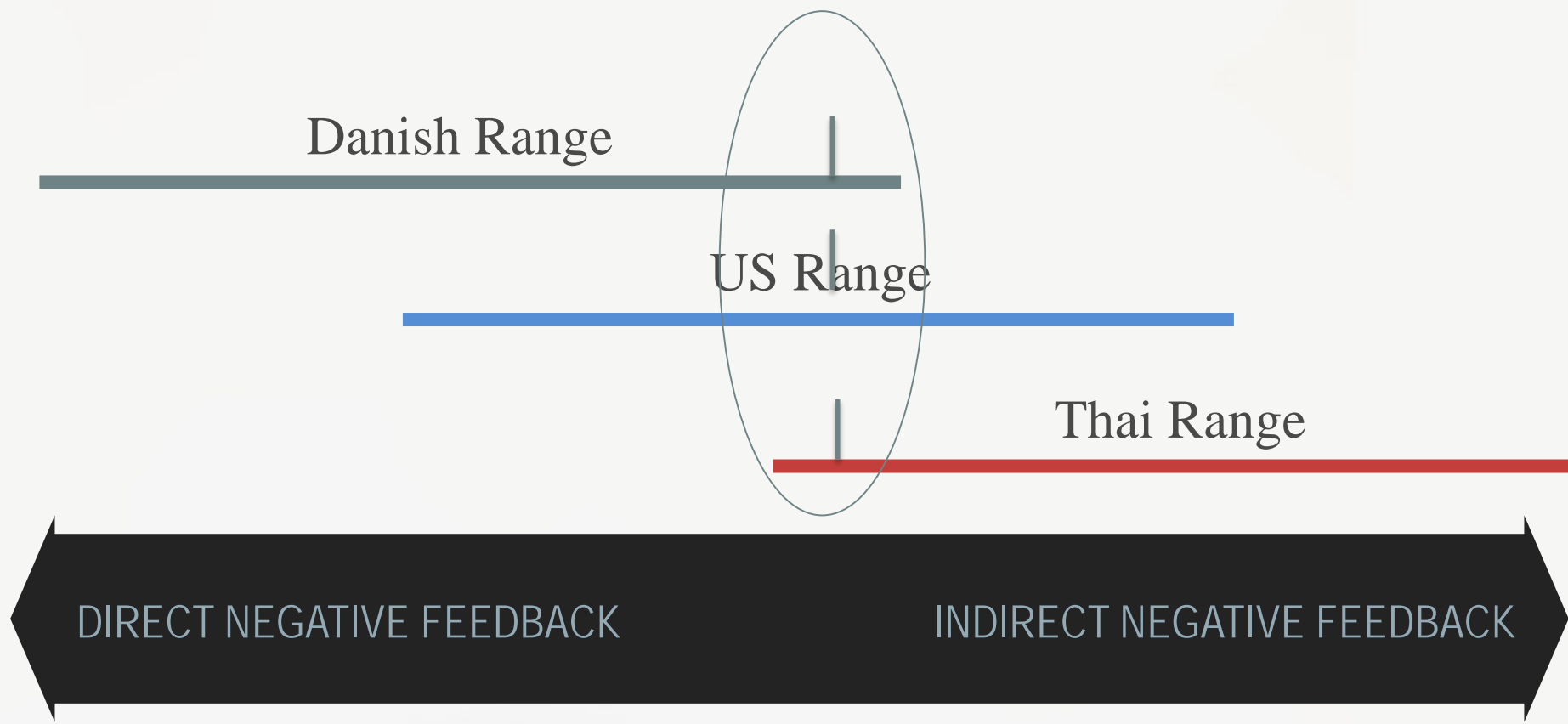


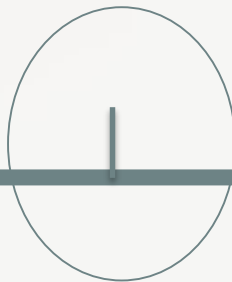
US Range



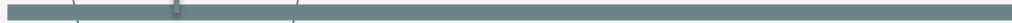
Thai Range



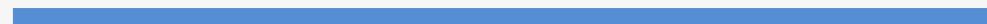




Danish Range



US Range



Thai Range



DIRECT NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

INDIRECT NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

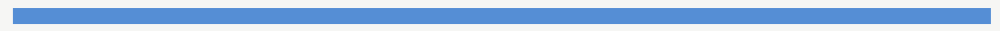




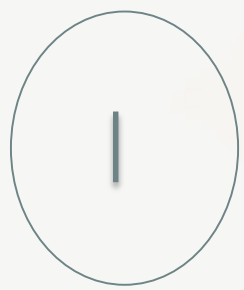
Danish Range

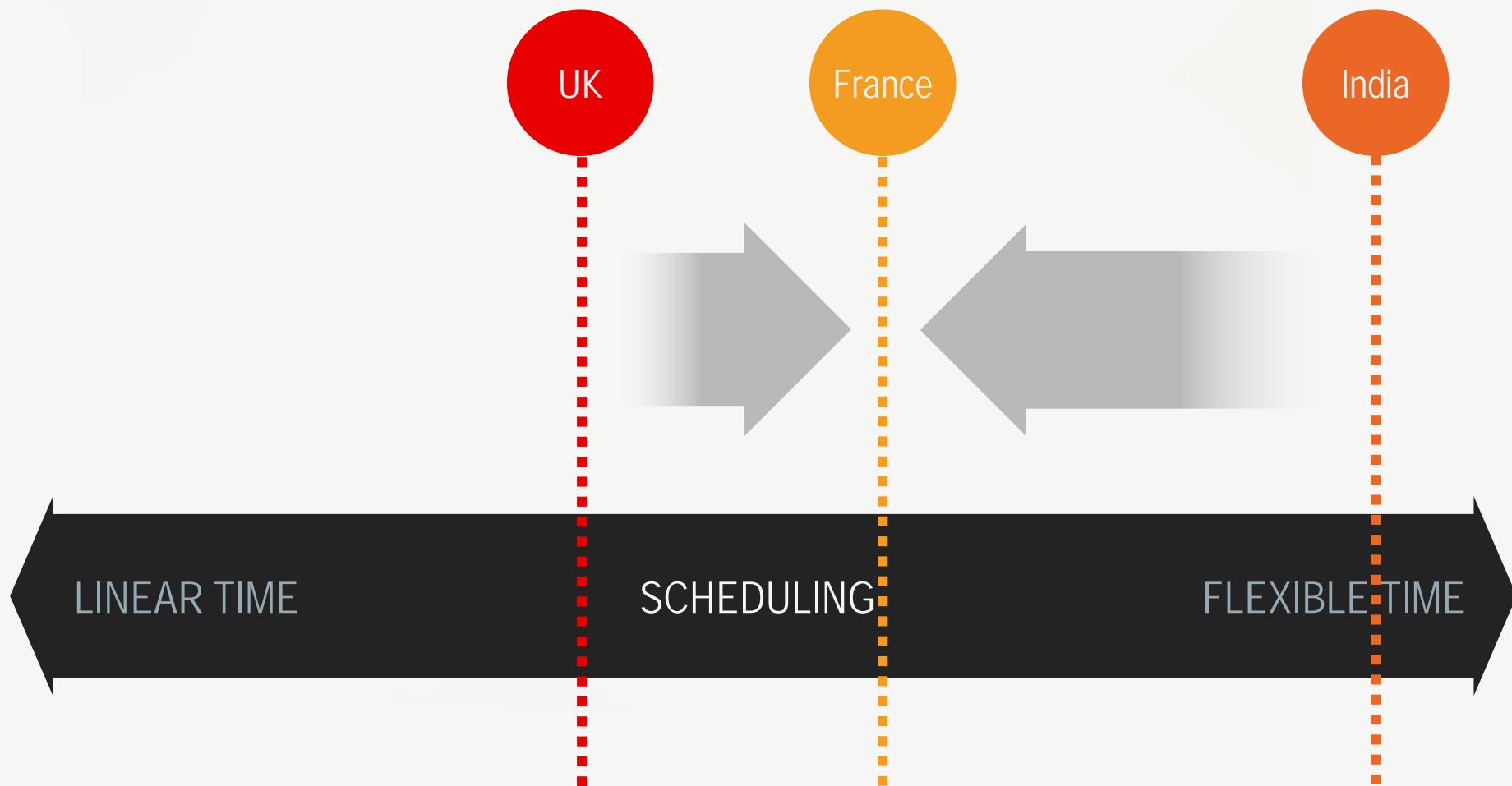


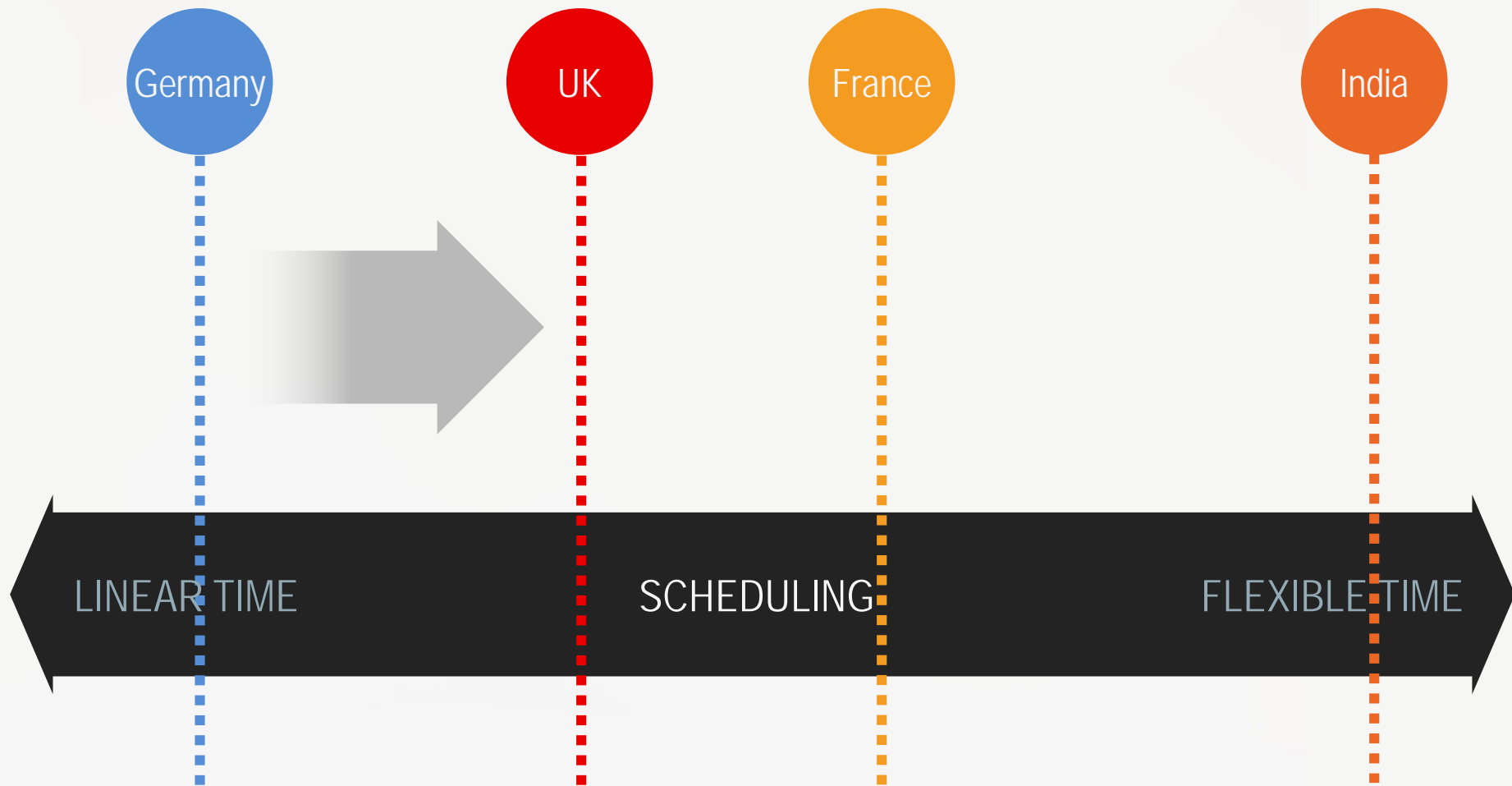
US Range



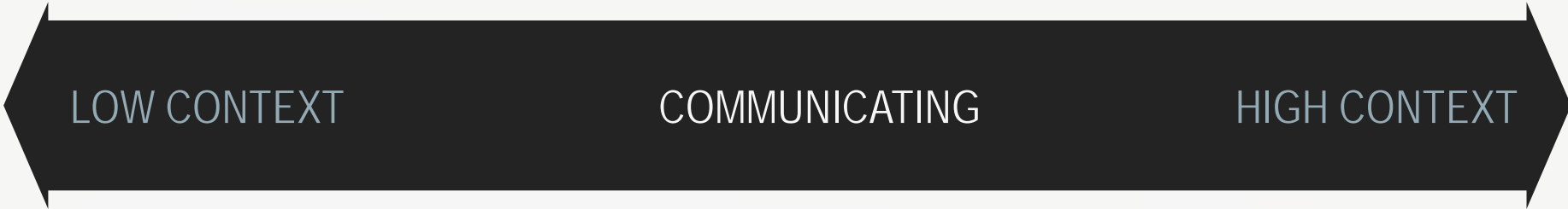
Thai Range

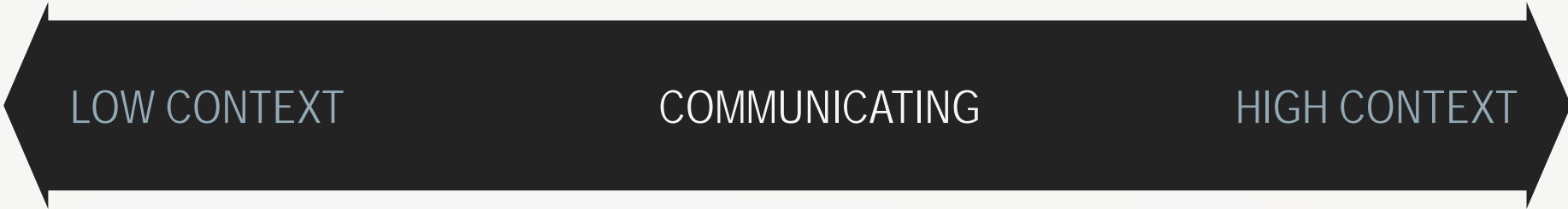












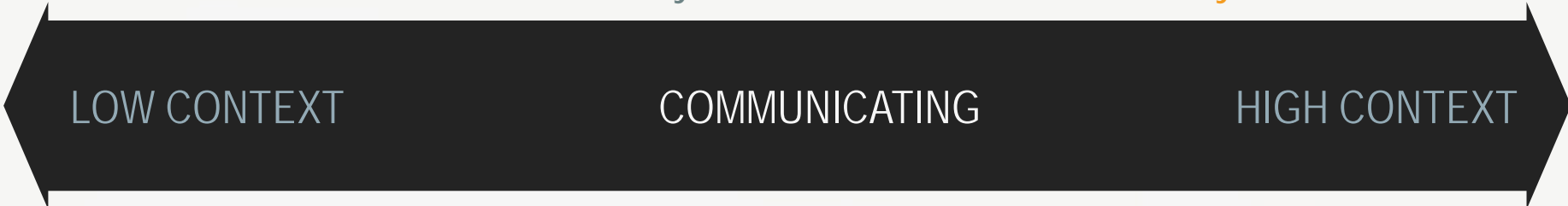
Explicit  
Simple  
Clear







US Netherlands Denmark UK Poland Italy France India Saudi Korea  
Australia Germany Swiss Belgium Brazil Spain Russia Zimbabwe Thai Japan  
Canada Ireland Sweden Mexico Romania Kenya China  
Finland Norway Peru Turkey Indonesia



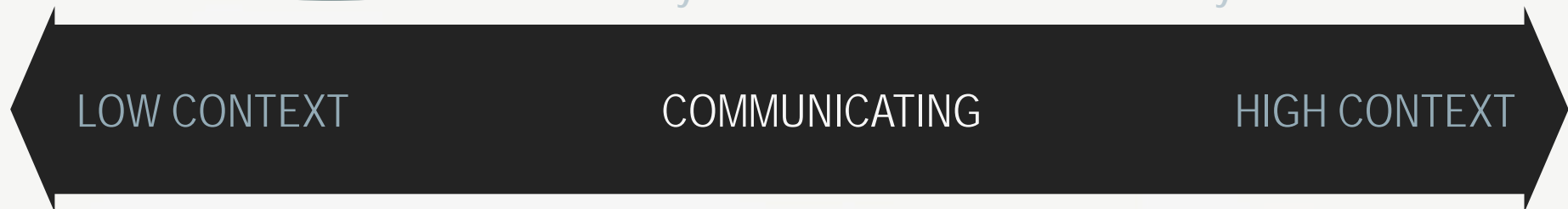
Explicit  
Simple  
Clear

Implicit  
Layered  
Nuanced





Denmark UK Poland Italy France India Saudi Korea  
Belgium Brazil Spain Russia Zimbabwe Thai Japan  
Mexico Romania Kenya China  
Peru Turkey Indonesia



Explicit  
Simple  
Clear

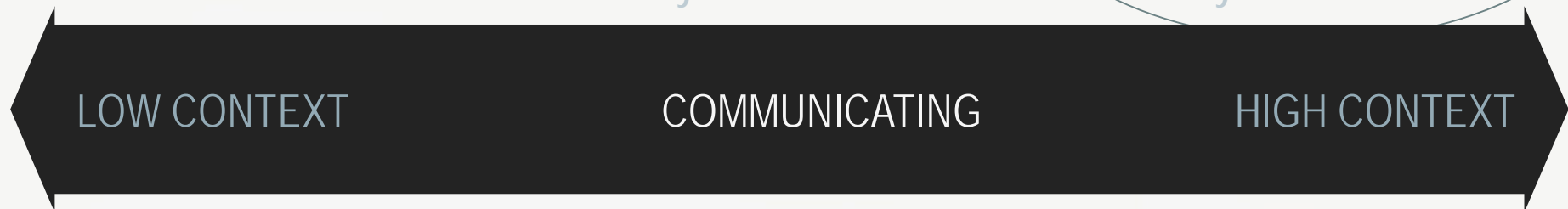
Implicit  
Layered  
Nuanced







US Netherlands Denmark UK Poland Italy France **India** Saudi **Korea**  
Australia Germany Swiss Belgium Brazil Spain Russia Zimbabwe **Thai** **Japan**  
Canada Ireland Sweden Mexico Romania Kenya **China**  
Finland Norway Peru Turkey **Indonesia**



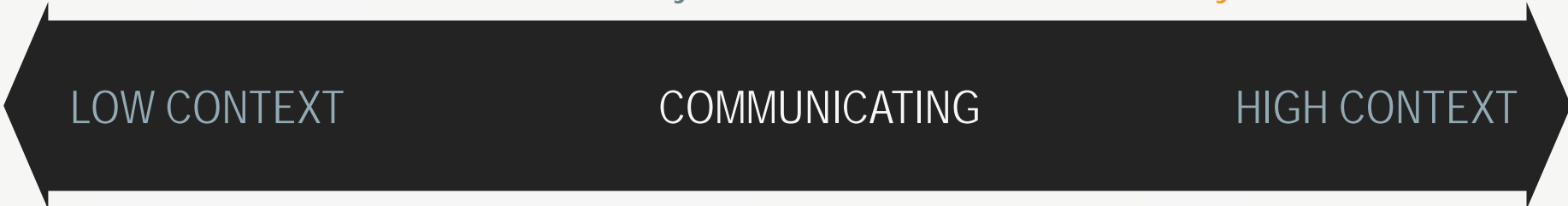
Explicit  
Simple  
Clear

Implicit  
Layered  
Nuanced





US Netherlands Denmark UK Poland Italy France India Saudi Korea  
Australia Germany Swiss Belgium Brazil Spain Russia Zimbabwe Thai Japan  
Canada Ireland Sweden Mexico Romania Kenya China  
Finland Norway Peru Turkey Indonesia

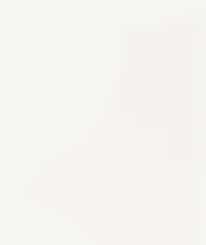


Explicit  
Simple  
Clear

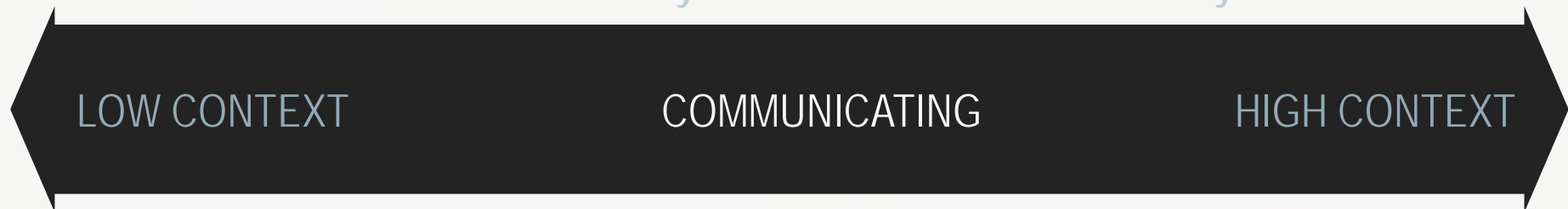
Implicit  
Layered  
Nuanced







US Netherlands Denmark UK Poland Italy **France** India Saudi Korea  
Australia **Germany** Swiss Belgium Brazil Spain Russia Zimbabwe Thai Japan  
Canada Ireland Sweden Mexico Romania Kenya China  
Finland Norway Peru Turkey Indonesia



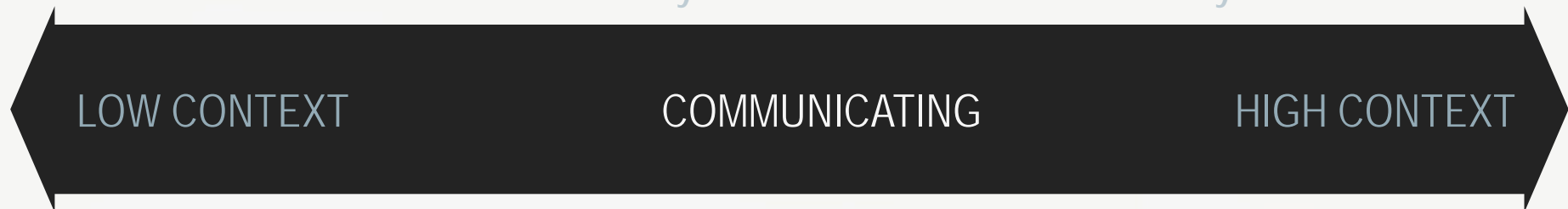
Explicit  
Simple  
Clear

Implicit  
Layered  
Nuanced





US Netherlands Denmark **UK** Poland Italy France India Saudi Korea  
Australia Germany Swiss Belgium Brazil Spain Russia Zimbabwe Thai Japan  
Canada Ireland Sweden Mexico Romania Kenya China  
Finland Norway **Peru** Turkey Indonesia



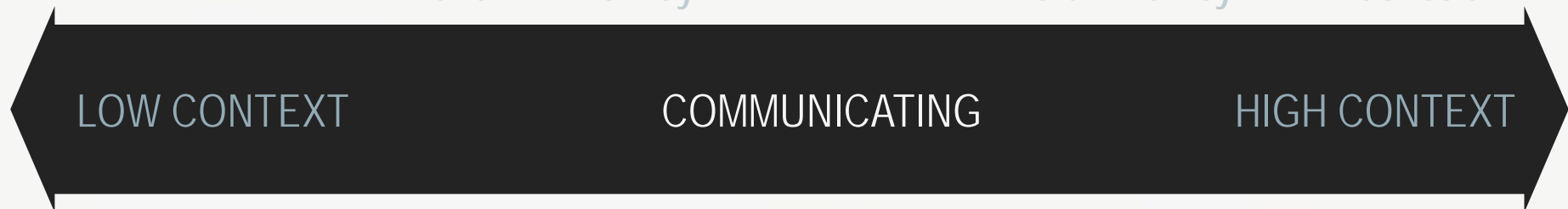
Explicit  
Simple  
Clear

Implicit  
Layered  
Nuanced





US Netherlands Denmark UK Poland Italy France India Saudi Korea  
**Australia** Germany Swiss Belgium Brazil Spain Russia Zimbabwe Thai Japan  
Canada Ireland Sweden Mexico Romania Kenya **China**  
Finland Norway Peru Turkey Indonesia



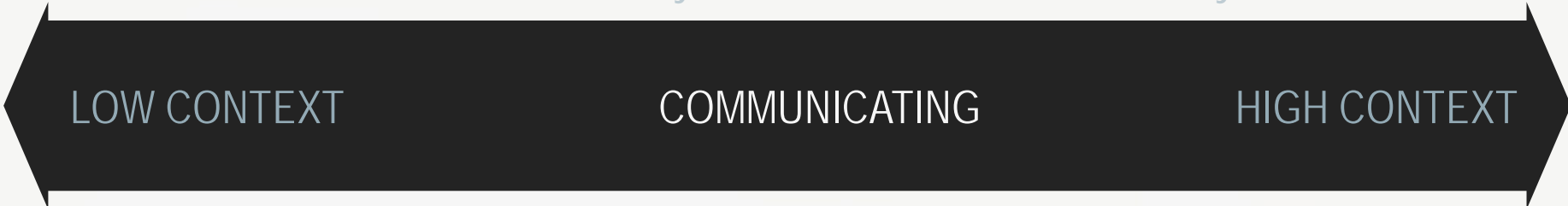
Explicit  
Simple  
Clear

Implicit  
Layered  
Nuanced





US Netherlands Denmark UK Poland Italy France India Saudi Korea  
Australia Germany Swiss Belgium Brazil Spain Russia Zimbabwe Thai Japan  
Canada Ireland Sweden Mexico Romania Kenya China  
Finland Norway Peru Turkey Indonesia



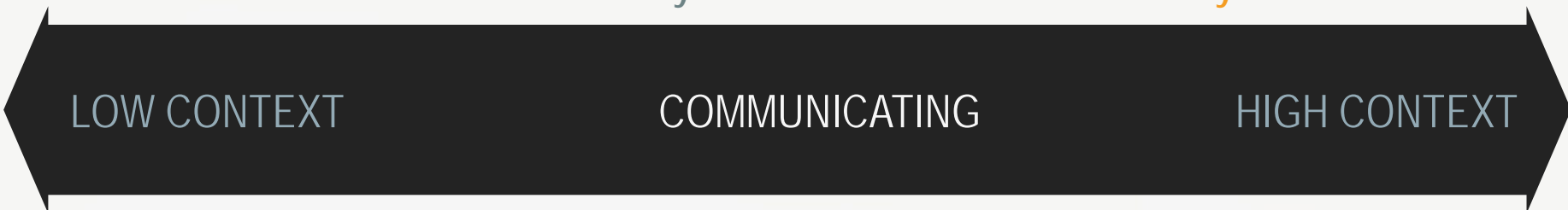
Explicit  
Simple  
Clear

Implicit  
Layered  
Nuanced

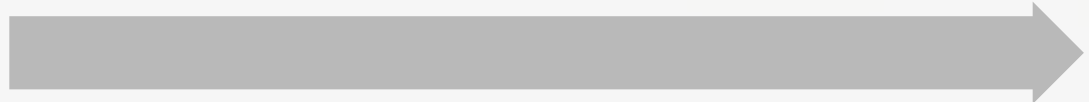




US Netherlands Denmark UK Poland Italy France India Saudi Korea  
Australia Germany Swiss Belgium Brazil Spain Russia Zimbabwe Thai Japan  
Canada Ireland Sweden Mexico Romania Kenya China  
Finland Norway Peru Turkey Indonesia



Explicit  
Simple  
Clear

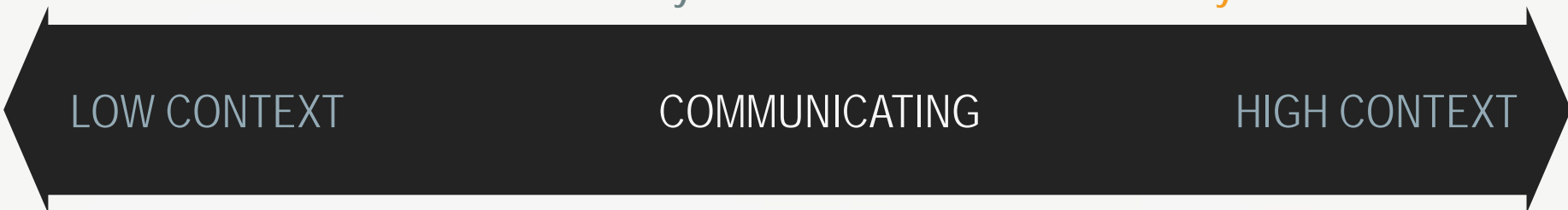


Implicit  
Layered  
Nuanced

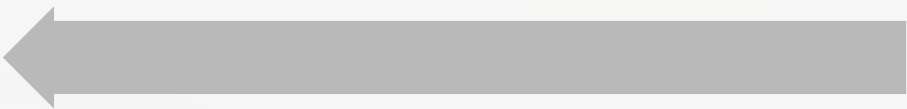




US Netherlands Denmark UK Poland Italy France India Saudi Korea  
Australia Germany Swiss Belgium Brazil Spain Russia Zimbabwe Thai Japan  
Canada Ireland Sweden Mexico Romania Kenya China  
Finland Norway Peru Turkey Indonesia



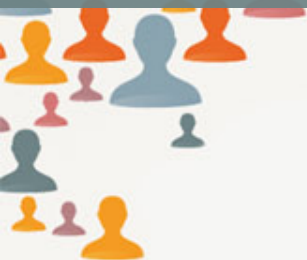
Explicit  
Simple  
Clear



Implicit  
Layered  
Nuanced



# Communicating discussions

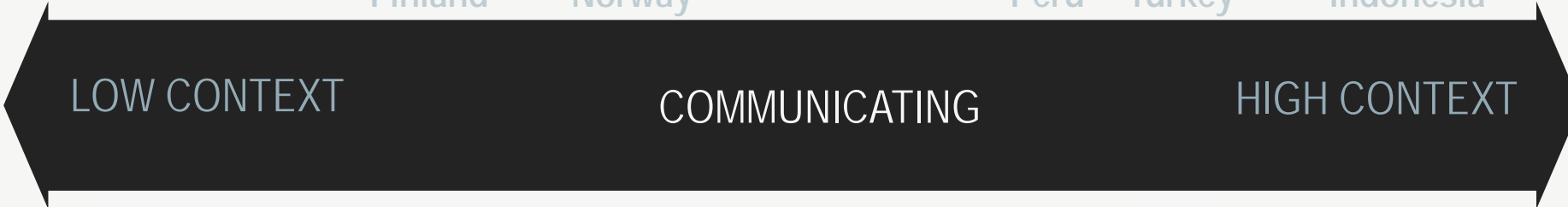


Historically what would have led the US to be the lowest context culture in the world and Japan the highest?





US Netherlands Denmark UK Poland Italy France India Saudi Korea  
Australia Germany Swiss Belgium Brazil Spain Russia Zimbabwe Thai Japan  
Canada Ireland Sweden Mexico Romania Kenya China  
Finland Norway Peru Turkey Indonesia



Explicit  
Simple  
Clear

Implicit  
Layered  
Nuanced

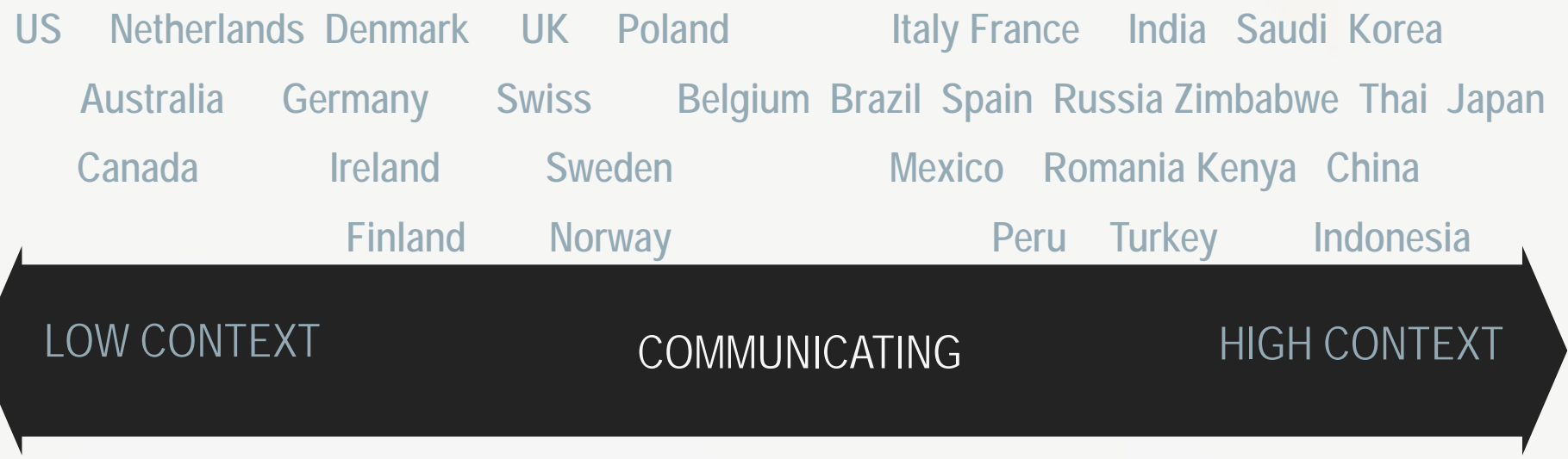






Poll: Is miscommunication most likely between:

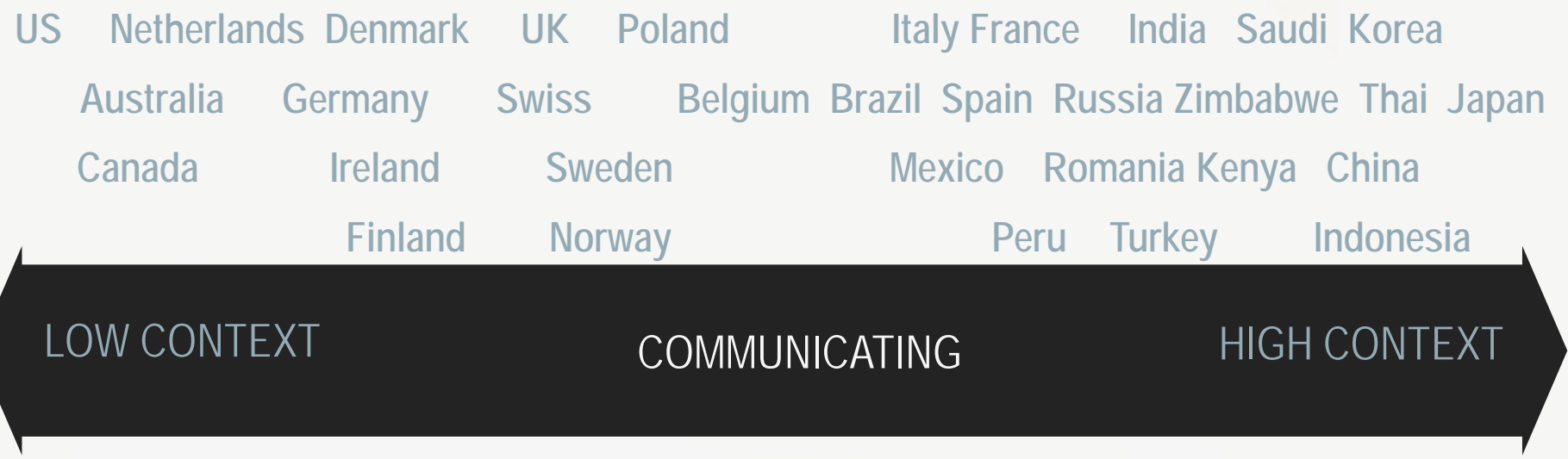
- A) A Low Context Culture and another Low Context Culture
- B) A Low Context Culture and a High Context Culture
- C) A High Context Culture and another High Context Culture





Poll: 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 need **low context processes**.



When working with low context cultures be **as explicit as possible**. Put it in writing. Repeat key points.



When working with high context cultures repeat yourself less, ask clarifying questions often and work on **increasing your ability to “read the air”**.





DIRECT NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

INDIRECT NEGATIVE FEEDBACK





Russia      Denmark Spain Italy USA      UK Brazil Turkey Zimbabwe Japan  
Germany France Swiss Belgium Canada India China Korea Thailand  
Netherlands Poland Norway Sweden Ireland Mexico Singapore Saudi Indonesia  
Israel Finland Australia Peru Egypt Kenya





Russia Denmark Spain Italy USA UK Brazil Turkey Zimbabwe Japan  
Germany France Swiss Belgium Canada India China Korea Thailand  
Netherlands Poland Norway Sweden Ireland Mexico Singapore Saudi Indonesia  
Israel Finland Australia Peru Egypt Kenya





## Up-graders:

Definitely

Very

Certainly

Clearly

In Fact

## Down-graders:

Sort of

Kind of

Maybe

Pretty Much

I Guess





Russia      Denmark   Spain   Italy   **USA**      **UK**   Brazil   Turkey   Zimbabwe   Japan  
Germany   France   Swiss   Belgium   **Canada**      India   China   Korea   Thailand  
Netherlands   Poland   Norway   Sweden   **Ireland**      Mexico   Singapore   Saudi   Indonesia  
Israel      Finland   Australia      Peru   Egypt   Kenya







Russia      Denmark   Spain   Italy   **USA**      UK   Brazil   Turkey   Zimbabwe   Japan  
Germany   **France**   Swiss   Belgium   Canada   India   China   Korea   Thailand  
Netherlands   Poland   Norway   Sweden   Ireland   Mexico   Singapore   Saudi   Indonesia  
Israel      Finland   Australia      Peru   Egypt   Kenya

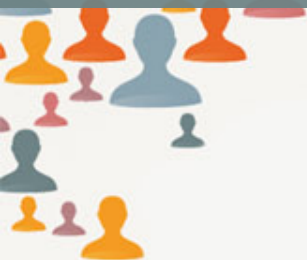




Russia	Denmark	Spain	Italy	USA	UK	Brazil	Turkey	Zimbabwe	Japan
Germany	France	Swiss	Belgium	Canada		India	China	Korea	Thailand
Netherlands	Poland	Norway	Sweden	Ireland		Mexico	Singapore	Saudi	Indonesia
Israel	Finland	Australia				Peru	Egypt	Kenya	



# High Context, Indirect Communication



It looks like we're going to have to keep the production line running on Saturday

I see.

Can you come on Saturday?

Yes, I think so.

That'll be a great help.

Yes, Saturday is a special day.

How do you mean?

It's my son's birthday.

How nice I hope you all enjoy it.

Thank you. I appreciate your understanding.

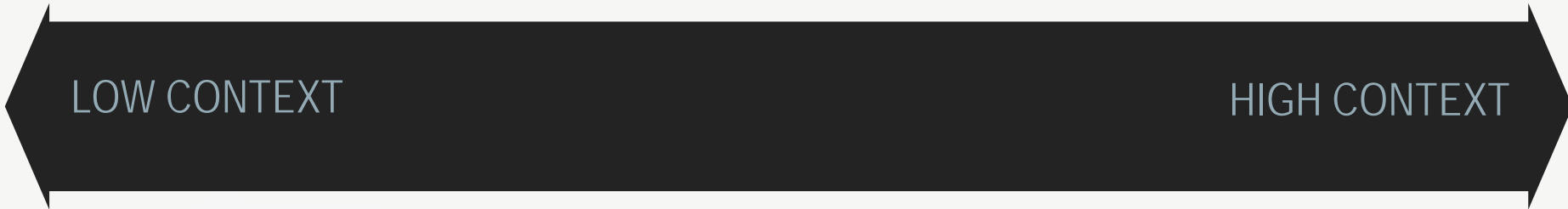
*Mr. Kim*

*Mr. Jones*

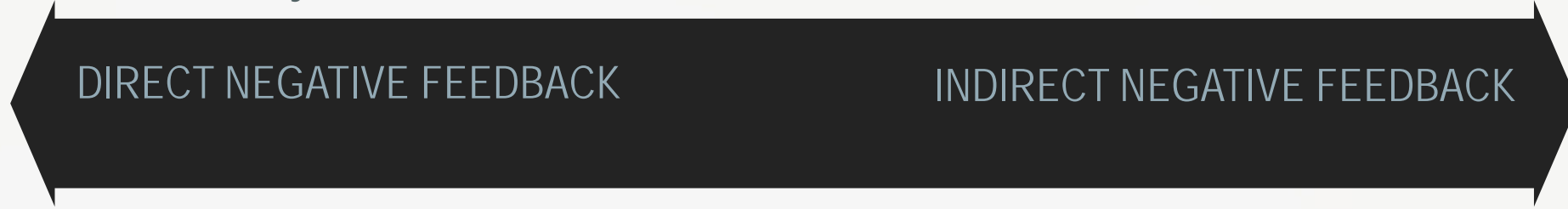


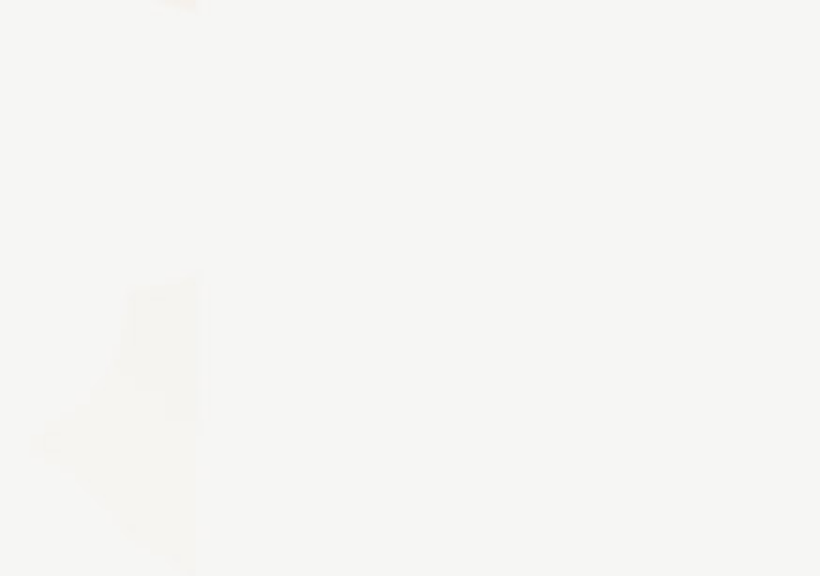


Netherlands  
Germany

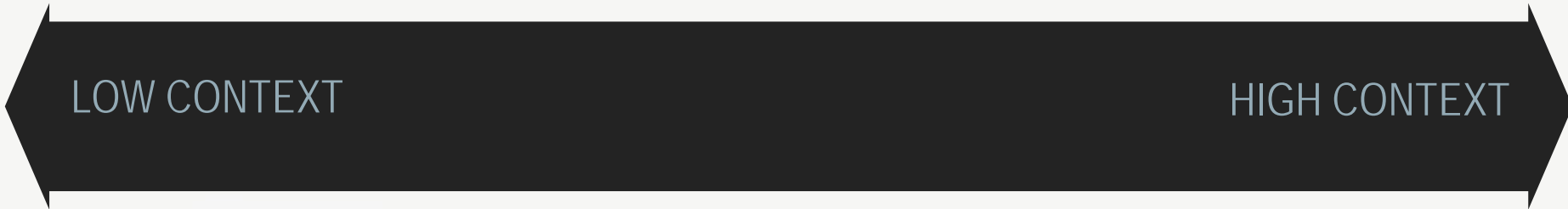


Netherlands  
Germany



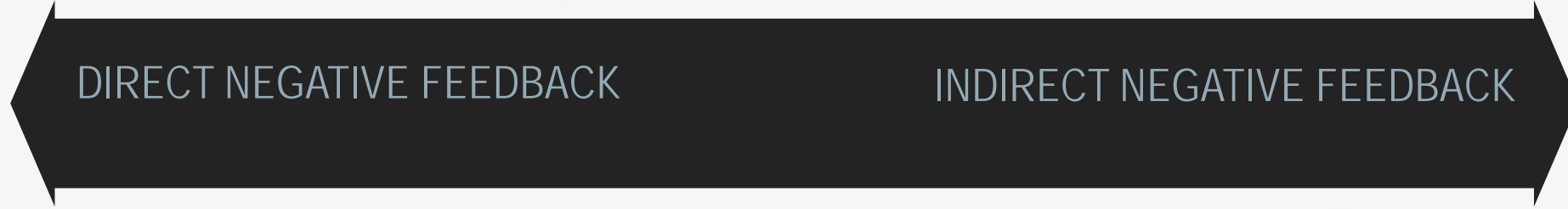


Spain France  
Russia



Russia

France Spain





USA

LOW CONTEXT

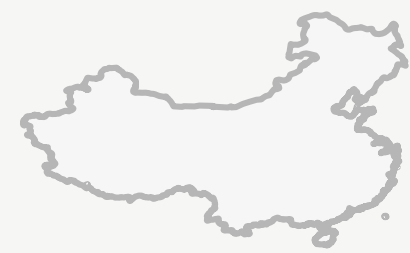
HIGH CONTEXT

USA

DIRECT NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

INDIRECT NEGATIVE FEEDBACK





We had 2 weeks of meetings in China to explore a JV. 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."

**Discussion question:**

What does the Chinese consultant mean?

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





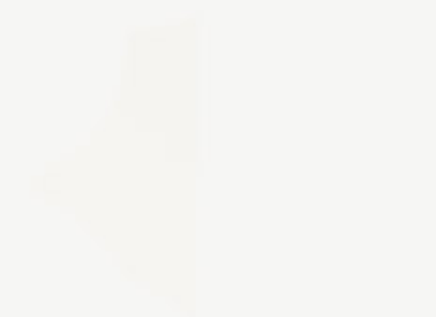
We then took the consultants advice and decided to invite the Chinese counterparts for a dinner over the weekend with the presence of various hierarchical levels from their organization. It was an excellent dinner during which we had time to socialize.

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.

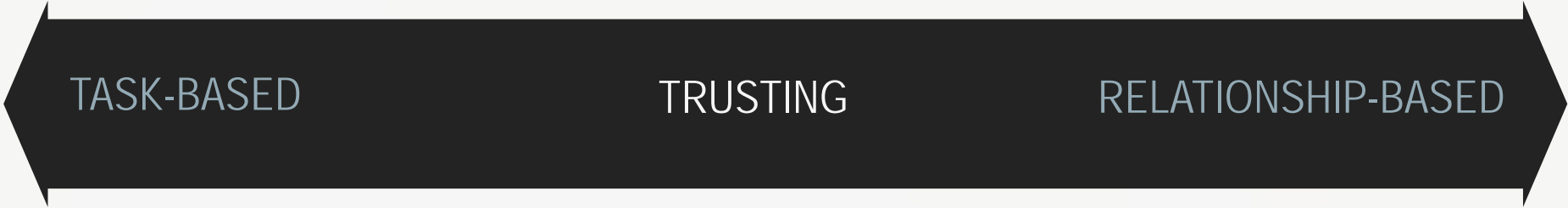
We re-started the meetings the following Monday and the Chinese willingness to cooperate had changed completely. They were now very enthusiastic and we began to work well as a team. We were then able to satisfactorily accomplish our work week two.







US Netherlands UK Switzerland Belgium France **Japan** Egypt Kenya  
Germany **Australia** Poland Spain Russia **Peru** **China** **Thailand**  
**Canada** Denmark Sweden Ireland Italy **Mexico** **Brazil** **Korea** **Zimbabwe**  
Norway Finland **Singapore** **Turkey** **India** **Saudi**



# 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:

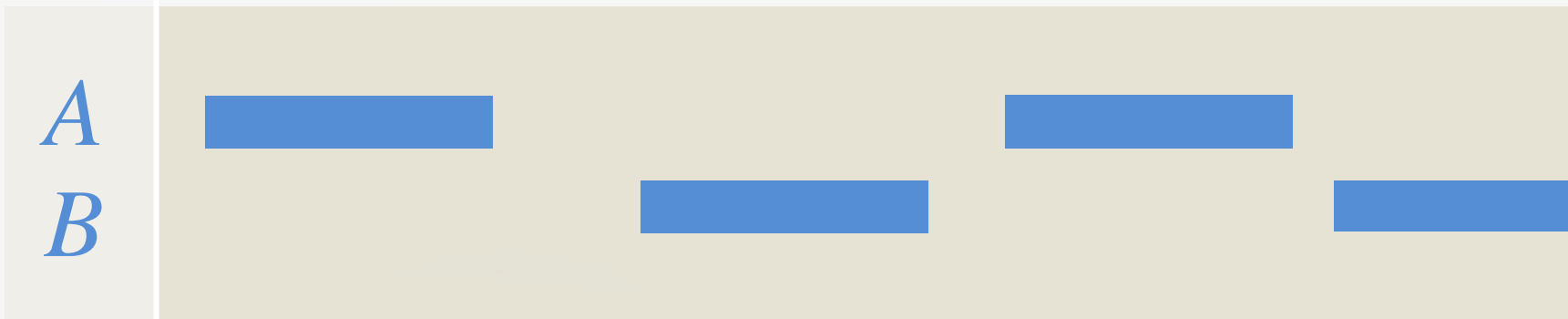
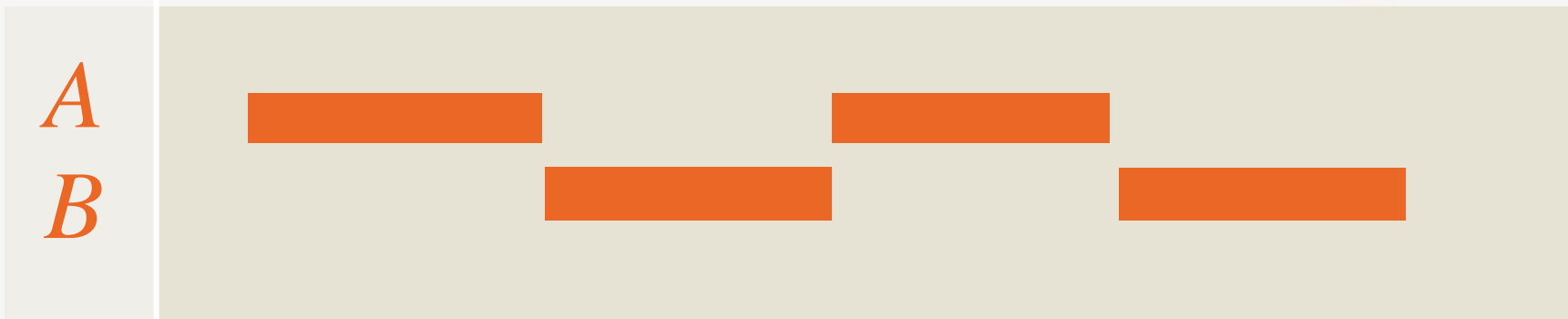
- Get down to business. Try shorter lunches, less non-work related talk
- Or explain why you want to invest the time – (“in order for me to work with someone well I need to spend time to know them. . .”).

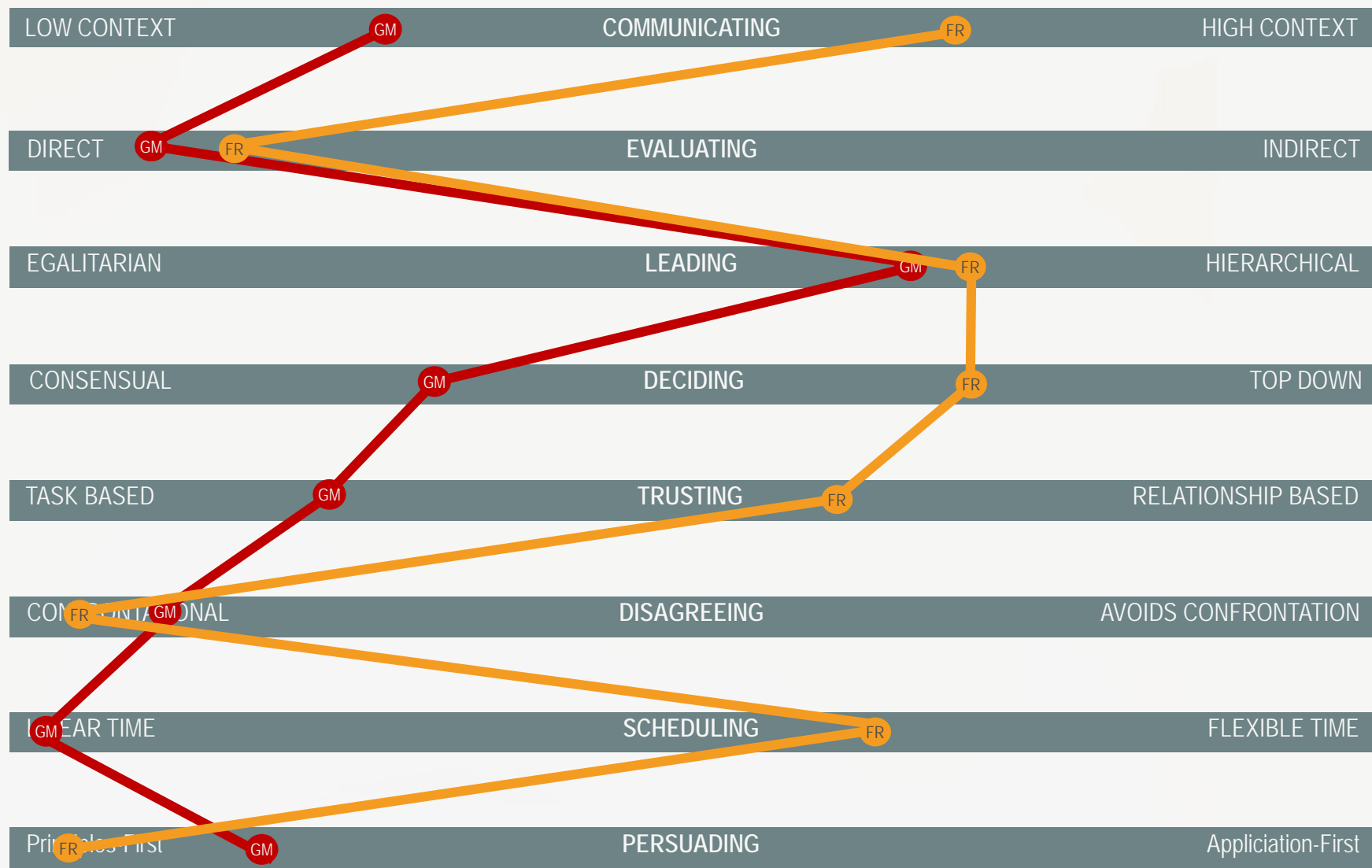




Japan Thailand China Poland Germany Israel Spain France UK  
Indonesia Finland Russia Sweden Belgium Mexico Netherlands Italy US  
Korea Zimbabwe Norway Denmark India Australia Ireland

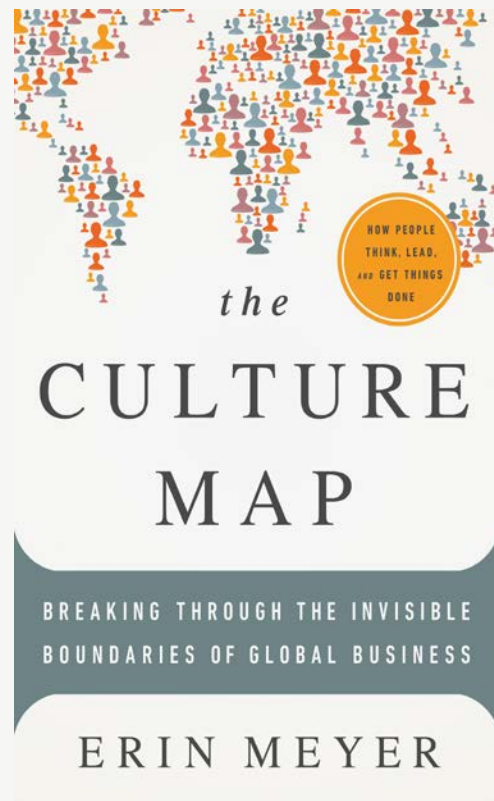






GM Germany FR France





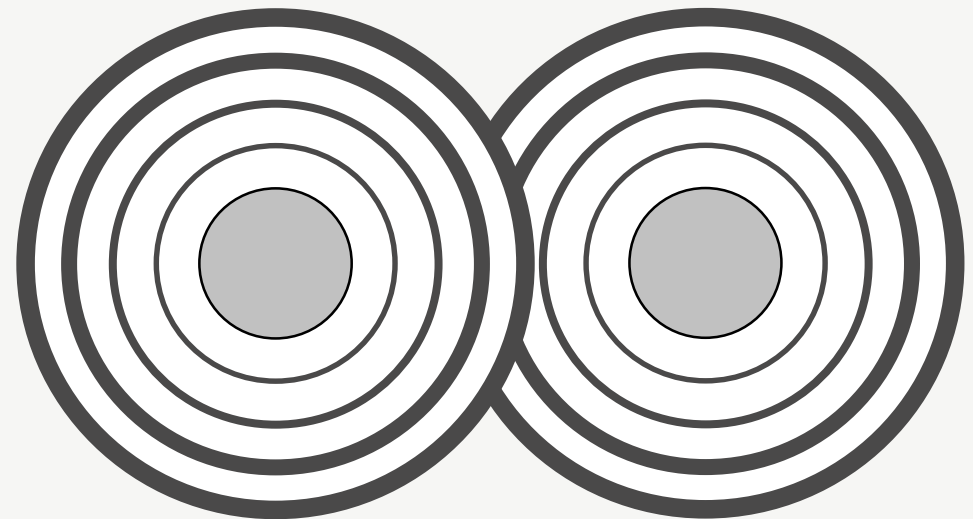
Country Mapping: <http://erinmeyer.com/product/7-days-free/>

Password code: NetelixerSeptember

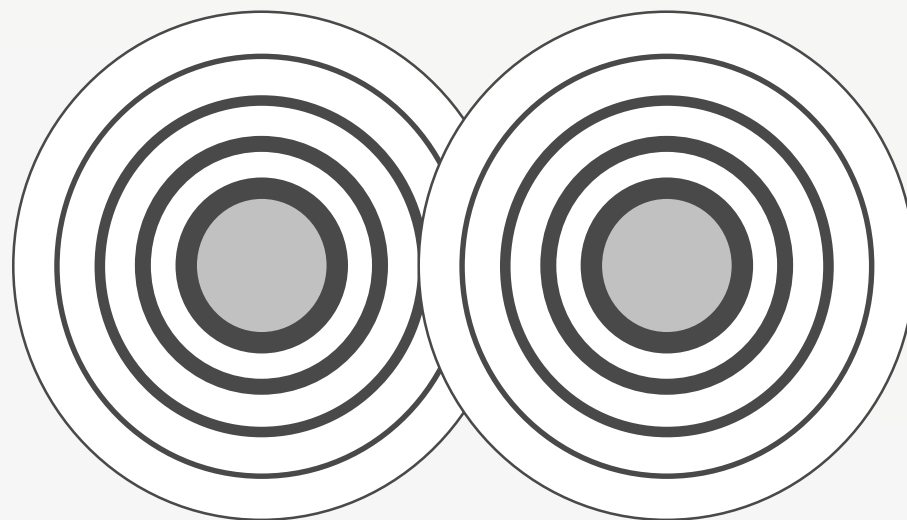
Personal Assessment: [www.erinmeyer.com/tools](http://www.erinmeyer.com/tools)







**Coconut**



**Peach**

