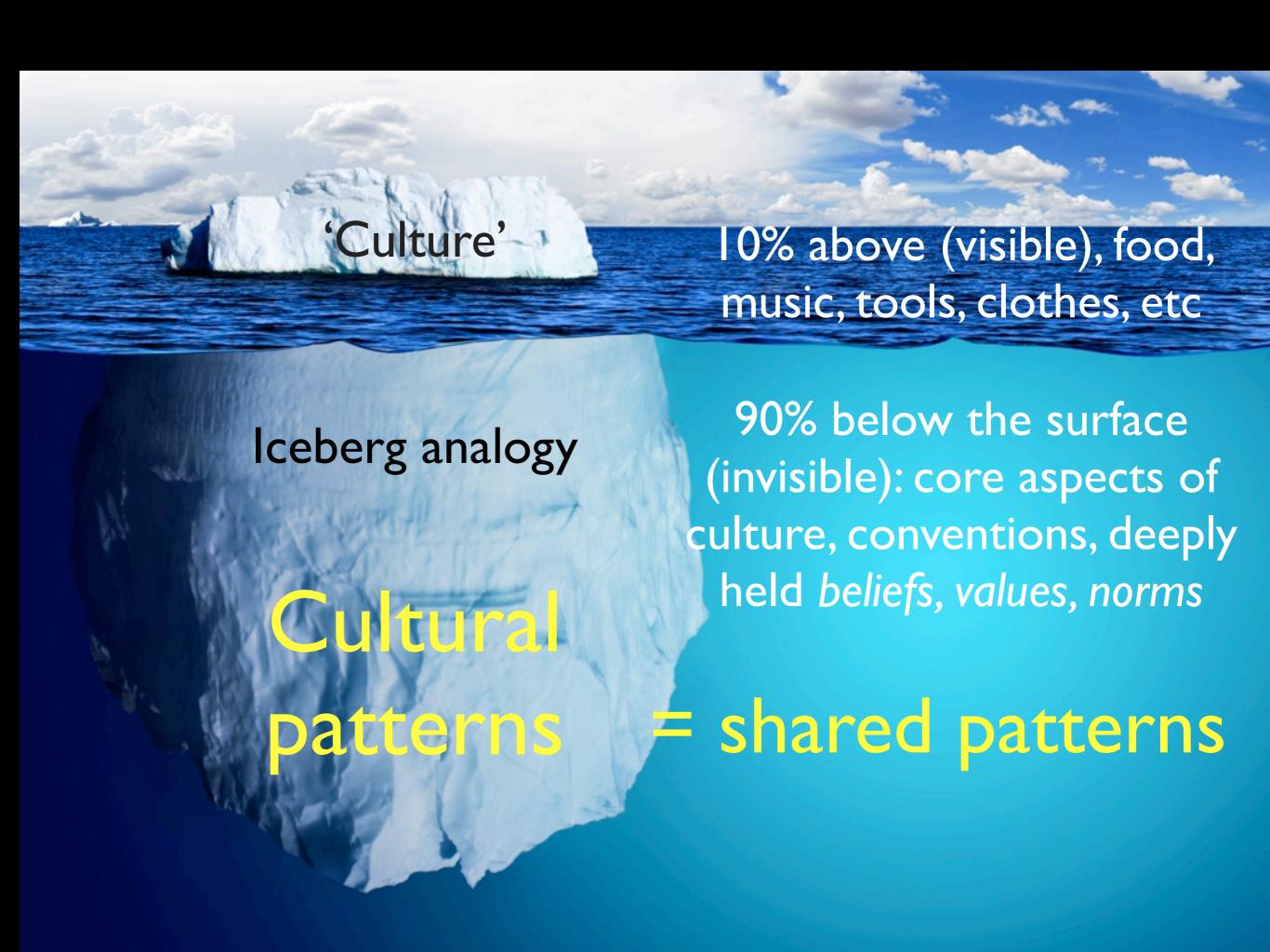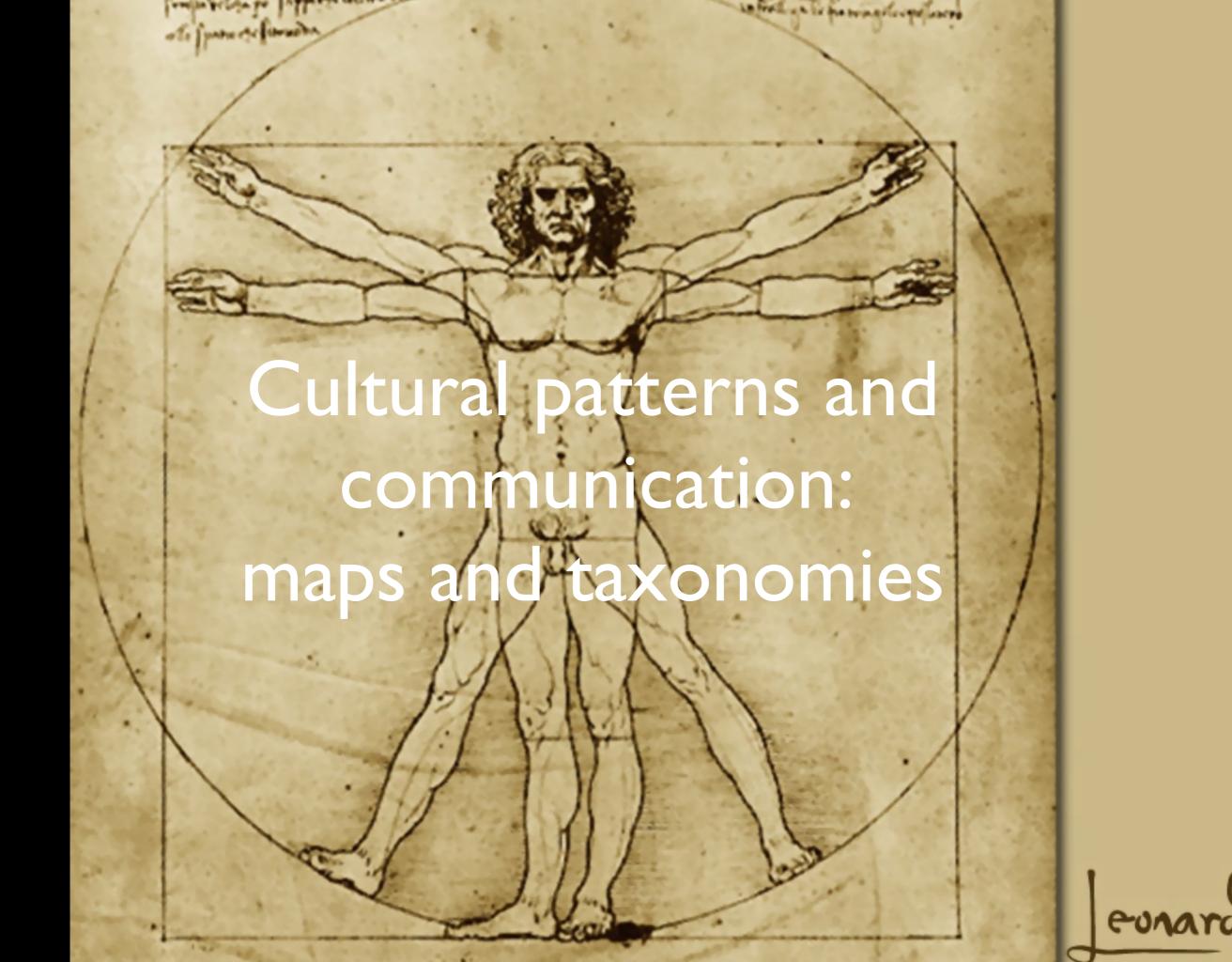# DM2556
Intercultural communication

Lecture 4

Leif Dahlberg CSC/KTH

Culture is defined as a learned set of shared interpretations about beliefs, values, norms and social practices.

'the culture's collective assumptions about what the world is, shared judgments about what it should be, widely held expectations about how people should behave, and predictable behaviour patterns that are commonly shared.' (IC 78)

'Culture'

10% above (visible), food, music, tools, clothes, etc

Iceberg analogy

90% below the surface (invisible): core aspects of culture, conventions, deeply held *beliefs, values, norms*

Cultural patterns

= shared patterns

Cultural patterns and communication:
maps and taxonomies

Europe seen from USA

Cultural taxonomies

- High- and Low-context cultures (Edward Hall)
- Hofstede's Cultural taxonomy (6 dimensions)
- Schwartz Cultural taxonomy (3 problems)
- The GLOBE Cultural taxonomy (9 dimensions)
- IC synthesis of cultural taxonomies (7 features)

Disclaimer: Cultural patterns are understood as a unique whole rather than an isolated dimension or charecteristic

High- and Low-context cultures (Edward Hall)

- preference for high-context messages vs low-context messages
- preference for indirect messages vs direct messages
- relation to ingroups (strong or weak) vs relation to outgroups (strong or weak)
- time is viewed as open & flexible (less structured, more responsive, less subject to external goals and constraints) vs time viewed as highly organized

Disclaimer: Individuals vary greatly within any given culture.

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Hofstede's Cultural taxonomy

- Power distance, perception and acceptance of social inequality; large and small power distance
- Avoidance/tolerance of uncertainty, presence of social rules and rituals; high and low uncertainty avoidance
- Individualism vs collectivism
- Masculine cultures vs feminine cultures
- Time orientation; long-term (deferred gratification) vs short term (quick results)
- Indulgence vs restraint

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Schwartz's Cultural taxonomy

- first problem: relationships & boundaries that should exist between people; autonomy (intellectual & affective) vs embeddedness (collectivist, identification with the group)
- second problem: how to organize and coordinate activities and work; egalitarian vs hierarchical
- third problem: relation to environment and resources; mastery vs harmony

The GLOBE Cultural taxonomy

1. Power distance (egalitarian vs hierarchy, authoritarian)
2. Uncertainty avoidance (rules, norms, rituals *or not*)
3. In-group collectivism (pride and loyality to the primary group *or not*)
4. Institutional collectivism (collective action, collective distribution of resources *or not*)
5. Gender egalitarianism *or not*
6. Assertiveness (confrontational & aggressive in social relations *or not*)
7. Performance orientation (task oriented and competitive *or not*)
8. Future orientation (planning, delayed gratification *or not*)
9. Humane orientation (encourage people to be fair, altruistic, friendly generous, caring etc. *or not*)

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IC synthesis of cultural taxonomies

How to use cultural
maps and taxonomies?

Don't confuse the map with the terrain!

And don't confuse the terrain with the map!

Signal