

Awareness and Implementation of Multicultural Diversity

*An analysis of the ICT sector across
Sweden and Germany*

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Date: 26.06.2016

Abstract

Multicultural teams are ordinary phenomena in our globalised age. According to media and scientific studies the ICT sector is one of the industries that struggle to implement these teams. As no specific studies exist investigating the recent situation, in Sweden and Germany, this paper provides some insights on how companies perceive multicultural teams. The research followed a mixed approach using an online-survey and interviews to collect the data. The primary purpose of this paper is to discover the trend regarding multicultural awareness and implementation in Swedish and German ICT companies. The research showed that multiculturalism is a byproduct rather than an actively pursued goal. Moreover, the study revealed that both countries display a high level of cultural awareness. Multicultural teams, in contrast to homogeneous, are largely perceived to improve several performance factors. Nonetheless, the level of awareness is not matched by a similar level of implementation. The study shows that ICT companies have great potential for the implementation of multicultural teams.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, diversity, cultural awareness, ICT, Sweden, Germany, performance, skill shortage

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1. Introduction

Recent articles and statistics show that even leading tech companies such as Google, Apple or Facebook struggle in diversifying their teams (Forrest, 2014). Those companies, despite carrying a strong multicultural attitude and openness towards diversity, struggle in implementing it, resulting in disproportioned gender and ethnicity representation (Jones and Trop, 2015). The research we conducted tries to define the role played by employees' multicultural background in companies working in the Information and Communication Technology (hereinafter ICT) industry.

As English is the first language in use when it comes to bits and bytes, coding languages are universal and not country specific. System update, patches, support forums and ICT best practices, when provided, are usually written in English. A universal working language, a prerequisite for effective working in the ICT field, is very often already given. Presumably, these circumstances allow the ICT sector to hire people with unique skills and knowledge from any country, making it a truly international occupation. In this respect, employers pursuing to acquire competences from abroad would lay the first brick to create teams with variegated cultural backgrounds.

Multicultural teams bring along a multitude of perspectives, creating new potentials as well as challenges. A study from Hofstede (1994) has shown that individuals possess plenitude of attitudes, values, and norms. Those are a product of the individuals' ethnical background and cultural heritage that people bring into a team (Cox, Lobel & McLeod, 1991). Elaborating on the subject, academia offers two schools of thought. One advocating the positive effect of diverse teams, and one condemning it. The first approach states that multicultural teams bring benefits such as increased innovation capacity, more creativity, higher efficiency, and different approaches to problem solving. Arguably, this allows companies to uphold distinct sets of motivational factors that encourage them to invest into multicultural teams (Jackson, 1992; Cox, 1994). The second school of thought reports several downsides of multicultural teams that might discourage concrete application of the strategy. Those downsides are for example: social division and bad communication (Pfeffer, 1987; Zenger & Lawrence, 1989). This study is not aimed at supporting one or another position; it rather concentrates on

discovering how cultural diversity is considered within firms, if it is considered an advantage or a disadvantage, and if it plays a part in hiring, team creation and team development. The authors, however, support the optimistic view.

The study envisages gaining a broad understanding of how multiculturalism, with all its pros and cons, is tangible in company decision making. Among others the hiring, team-composition and team-development processes are put under close scrutiny. A prerequisite to unleash the potentials of multicultural teams is that companies possess a certain level of cultural awareness and openness (Pitts, 2006). To test this, the paper draws upon the knowledge from professionals that are either employed in Human Resources or team management positions.

We started to investigate the situation of multicultural teams in the ICT sector of Sweden because we are studying here. The fact that Sweden sustains a mature ICT industry and is experiencing a troublesome skill shortage in the field grabbed our attention even more (De Prato & Nepelski, 2014). Soon after, we widened our focus on Germany, recognising that its strong ICT sector is confronted as well with troublesome conditions on the labour market (Mas & Guevara Radoselovics, 2014). Sweden and Germany have therefore strong similarities in their ICT sector; however, the two countries show some differences in cultural aspects that need to be accounted for. While in Sweden the state historically is generally more focused on diversity and equality (Roth & Hertzberg, 2010), the German society is struggling with the change triggered by the immigration of foreigners (Mühe, 2010). In a similar manner, Sweden and Germany show a strong difference in their level of uncertainty avoidance. Uncertainty avoidance stands for *“the degree to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity”* (The Hofstede Centre, 2016). Sweden exhibits close to no avoidance of uncertainty while Germany is more inclined to avoid unfamiliar situations (The Hofstede Centre, 2016a; 2016b). Presumably, these societal differences can influence the individual perspective on multiculturalism. Hence the decision to analyse the ICT sector in Sweden and Germany.

Moreover, the recent skill shortage is pushing ICT companies in Sweden and Germany to internationalise their recruitment process. Presumably, the acute need for skilled labour, and the resulting more diverse working environment, will create new challenges and opportunities for the ICT sector. The refugees, which both Sweden and Germany have welcomed in high

number, are seen as an additional source for potential skilled labour: a survey suggests that roughly 30% have secondary education and 35% higher education (The Economist, 2015). In this respect, it appears to be fundamental to be prepared to deal with the concept of diversity in teams. The comparative method, borrowed from political science, enables us to assess if given the strong similarities of Sweden and Germany a different level of diversity acknowledgement has an influence of how companies perceive the role of multiculturalism.

Overall, if the future is so tightly linked with migrating foreigners, knowing how your company deals with diversity is fundamental. Therefore, the results of this research are principally aimed at managers, HR departments, and CEOs. This emphasises the importance for a company to gain understanding of their awareness and implementation level. During this analysis, there is a possibility for a pattern to appear and allow a generalisation of these concepts that might be extended to other countries, with similar conditions.

1.2 Setting the Field

To understand the role of multicultural teams in ICT companies, it is crucial to define these terms. This is particularly important because the usage of different definitions may lead to a different outcome. This research is based on the following concepts:

1.2.1 Diversity

Our definition of diversity revolves around the determinants of culture and ethnicity. Generally speaking, the concept of diversity is widely used throughout sociology, politics, law and science. Hence, diversity is something we know and are familiar with. Nonetheless, it is somehow harder to find agreement on its precise definition. Talking about individuals, the Merriam-Webster (2016) dictionary recites “*the state of having people who are different races or who have different cultures in a group or organization*”. Skipping the concept of race, which is outdated, the definition will be limited only to ethnicity (or ethnic group) and culture. This definition, although correct, groups everything into culture. Other more detailed definitions comprise characteristics such as age and gender. Despite considering gender a very important point in the definition of diversity, this research will not take in consideration the gender of the employees. Therefore, adding a limitation to the field of our research, the

definition of diversity considered will be the following: “*The dissimilarity among company members in terms of ethnicity, race, culture, beliefs and norms*” (Guzzo & Dickson, 1996, p. 331). The research accepts the fact that organisational diversity is still a rather loosely formulated concept that does not offer “*comprehensive theoretical models*” which could give clear guidance on how the level of diversity in a company can be assessed (Pitts, 2006, p.251). Under these circumstances, the research uses the above definition of diversity, even if it still gives individuals room for interpretation on the different adhered attributes.

1.2.2 Multiculturalism

Multicultural teams, the joint work of people with different cultural backgrounds, are arguably the central focus of this research. The word multicultural entails a variety of cultures coexisting. On the dictionary the definition is “*relating to or including many different cultures*” (Merriam-Webster, 2016a). This is usually used to define an environment or a person whose culture is a combination of more than one culture. Individuals can be multicultural by growing in different countries, with different cultures, or by being grown in a family with parents having different cultures. Teams, or companies, can be multicultural in the moment their members have different cultures. When in the research there is mention of diversity, if not stated otherwise, it is always the diversity spawning from multiculturalism: cultural diversity (Maude, 2011).

1.2.3 Cultural awareness

Cultural awareness is regarded as a prerequisite of diverse teams in order to create cultural synergies (Pitts, 2006). Individuals who do not value diversity are regarded as a hindrance to a multicultural team, as conflicts and segmentation become more likely (Pitts, 2006). In this research, the concept of cultural awareness will be largely used. The term cultural awareness stands for the general awareness, or knowledge of the advantages caused by different cultures interacting. Cultural awareness exists if individuals can appreciate each other’s differences (Pitts, 2006).

1.2.4 Implementation

To assess how prominent multicultural teams are in ICT companies, we use the term implementation. Companies can have a high or low level of implementation depending on how many multicultural teams exist. Connected to multiculturalism, this research regards the level of implementation as the application of beliefs and knowledge regarding multicultural diversity. To address multiculturalism, or the interactions of multiple cultures, the literature presents two different approaches: Integration and Assimilation. Integration is the process where a minority culture sacrifices part of itself in order to fit in the main culture. Assimilation is a two-way process where both the cultures try and undergo some small modifications to allow their coexistence (Maude, 2011).

This research does not focus on which kind of implementation companies perform, rather the focus is if there is implementation of the awareness. Meaning that if there is implementation there are multicultural teams and those are, supposedly, created in light of the additional benefits they can produce.

1.3 Best Available Knowledge

Supporting this research there is large amount of secondary sources available that focus on the performance of multicultural/heterogeneous teams and compares it with more traditional/homogeneous teams. The debate is mainly divided into an optimistic and pessimistic view accentuating the positive and negative effects of heterogeneous teams.

On the one side, the optimistic view detects an overall higher performance of heterogeneous teams compared with its counterparts (Mannix & Neale, 2005; DiStefano & Maznevski, 2010). In more detail, the perspective lists several positive effects of multicultural teams. Among others these include: (1) creation of values and benefits (Cox, Lobel, & McLeod, 1991), (2) broader range of knowledge, expertise, and perspectives (Hoffman, 1959; L.Hoffman & Maier, 1961), (3) higher quality solutions (Hoffman & Maier, 1961), (4) benefits for creativity tasks (Triandis, Hall & Even, 1965), (5) better mediation of conflicts and potential increases in performance (Hoffman, Harburg & Maier, 1962), (6) enhancement of problem solving tasks as a result of cognitive conflicts, (7) novel insights and solutions emerging from the different perspectives (Nemeth & Kwan, 1987).

Notwithstanding, studies show that it is very difficult to trace back a single variable that defines the performance or effectiveness of a group/team. Many different variables such as team cohesiveness, composition, leadership, motivation and goals can have a profound impact on performance and do not have to be directly connected with diversity. Neither does a clear definition of performance exist (Guzzo & Dickson, 1996). Given the manifold attributes that define team performance some insights might have to be used more carefully.

Other studies focus more on diversity dimension such as: (1) expertise (Stasser, Stewart, & Wittenbaum, 1995), (2) information (Gruenfeld et al., 1996), (3) ethnicity (Watson et al., 1993). The study focuses on the ethnicity dimension. The other two dimensions are adopted as given.

Di Stefano's & Maznevski's (2000) work offer a study on why multicultural teams can perform good or bad, and how much the performance is affected depending on good or poor management; thus assessing the superiority of a diverse team over a heterogeneous one, if well managed.

The more negative and pessimistic view outlines negative effects such as: (1) social division, social disintegration (Pfeffer, 1987), (2) absenteeism and turnover (O'Reilly & Pfeffer 1984, 1987), (3) communication (Zenger & Lawrence, 1989), (4) performance (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992).

Authors such as Lewis (2005) provide a perspective on the different communication styles. Lewis' study might give guidance to better understand the insights gained in the company in-depths interviews. In respect of recruitment processes, many primary sources such as web articles, How-To-Do's & best-practices exist. However, the sources are mainly focused on potential hurdles in the recruitment processes (Race for Opportunity, 2012) rather than the intrinsic motivation behind the recruitment process. Furthermore, secondary sources on biases in decision making (Kahneman, 2011; Gilboa, 2001; Lovallo et al, 2007) can provide some insights on the reasoning behind certain choices in the recruitment and team creation processes.

The paper uses secondary sources that concentrate on cultures. At this, mainly studies from Hofstede (1994), Schein (1990), Cox, Lobel & Mcleod (1991) and the Globe Study (2012) are used to set the gained insights into perspective. We argue that the different dimensions of

national & organisational cultures such as collectivist vs individualist societies etc. are helpful to bridge our insights with the academy sphere.

Furthermore, the paper bases its relevance on the studies of Chatman et al. (1998) and Lau & Murnighan (1998), stressing the influence of demographic diversity in organisations. As further studies have shown, the influx of refugees brings high-skilled labour into the country with a post-secondary education background. If employed, those people change the demographic composition within an organisation (Aiyar et al., 2016; Bevelander & Irastorza, 2014). However, the study as well showed that in Sweden, *“the long-term integration of refugees and their relatives has been sluggish compared to that of mobile EU citizens and labour migrants”* (Bevelander & Irastorza, 2014, p.25). Consequently, companies should not wait for government actions but could become proactive in employing skilled labour, especially in industries that experience labour shortages (Swedish Institute, 2016, The Local, 2014). According to recent numbers, software developers and IT architects are in the top 5 bottleneck vacancies in Sweden while the remaining three occupations are related to mining (RAMBOLL, 2014). Moreover, the ICT sector in Sweden is increasingly crucial (OECD 2004, Giertz, Rickne & Rouvinen, 2015).

There is an abundance of literature regarding diversity and multiculturalism. To compose an useful knowledge frame some screening and selection was required. We decided to filter our sources to include only the one addressing our research questions, or the ones that could support the process of answering those questions. On some occasions, more sources produced slightly different positions regarding a certain subject. We analysed them together to get a clear picture of what was overlapping, and we used this knowledge during our research, to address specific points and to avoid going in uncertain area. Overall, the above mentioned literature allows us to lay a clear foundation on why the creation of multicultural/diverse team's should be on every (tech) company's agenda. The literatures outline and acknowledge the difficulties that companies might encounter.

1.4 Motivation and Reasoning

Determined to learn more about multicultural teams in the ICT sector, we consider the existence of a connection between some mundane factors. Defining the final research focus of our paper, we soon encountered that our common interests on the ICT industry and multicultural teams are not standalone entities. Rather they should arguably be regarded as highly intertwined, given that the ICT industry is recently facing a perceptible shortage of skilled labour. This could, to some extent, open new opportunities for those who enter the jobs market in the future. To illustrate our overarching personal motivation and reasoning behind the research this chapter shortly outlines the similar status of the Swedish and German ICT industry and the corresponding skill shortage. Hence, the chapter presents our underlying intrinsic motivational factors, without directly anticipating the research's core purpose.

1.4.1 Status on the ICT industries

Sweden, within the EU, is one of the leading countries in the ICT sector. The industry contributes a considerable share on the country's GDP and general employment. (Giertz, Rickne & Rouvinen, 2015; OECD, 2015). The country's ICT including R&D investments are "*well beyond their economic size*" (Mas & Guevara Radoselovics, 2014, p.6), and are perceived as "*important drivers of economy growth*" (Edquist & Henrekson, 2015, p.19). Arguably, among other factors, this helped several Swedish startups to grow to a considerable importance. Tech companies such as Klarna, iZettle, Skype, Mojang, Spotify and King grant Sweden international recognition (Davidson, 2015; Coleman, 2014; Tung, 2014).

While in Germany ICT industry is not as potent as in its Swedish counterpart, in terms of share, the ICT sector is not less important. Germany has some global heavyweights in the tech industry (Siemens, SAP, Telekom) and is generally regarded as the economic engine of the European Union. Germany is the biggest ICT manufacturer and the second largest ICT service provider (Mas & Guevara Radoselovics, 2014). The country has a considerable share of producing industry that is right now experiencing its digitisation (Zaske, 2015). To lead this process, known as "industry 4.0", it is vital for Germany to have a solid and healthy ICT industry able to transfer its knowledge into the industry (Pentsi, 2016; PwC, 2016). Moreover,

Germany next to Sweden is considered by the media as one of the most attractive countries for startups in Europe (The Local, 2015; Murray, 2014).

Both countries are two important actors in the ICT industry. They rank high in the European ICT Poles of Excellence (Prato & Nepelski, 2014) and spend the most money on ICT's R&D in the EU (Prato & Rohman, 2015). Additionally, they are both globally ranking high on their ICT potential (World Economic Forum, 2015). It can be argued that the ICT sector, in Sweden and Germany, sustains the economy in terms of employment and value added. The estimates for 2015 give figures of 246.000 and 1.3 million employees in the sector respectively (Empirica, 2014a; 2014b). Altogether, both countries' position in the field made us consider the industry worth to conduct research on.

1.4.2 Eminent industry skill shortage

Companies within the European Union are confronted with a precarious situation on the labour market for ICT professionals. Within the ICT industry more than 85% are high skilled jobs and a considerable skill shortage arguably leads to a growing competition for hiring expert knowledge (Attström et al., 2014). The lasting ICT vacancy bottleneck is one of the highest on the EU labour market, across all existing occupations (Attström et al., 2014). This makes it more and more difficult to recruit talents needed in the ICT field. Gender and age related aspects moreover prevent the market to take full advantage of the workforce. Given the steady demand of high skilled labour in the ICT sector, with 80% of applicants lacking the appropriate skills, the shortage is unlikely to end soon (Attström et al., 2014). In 2007, Garner already proposed that to face the growing skill shortage a global job market for recruitment of ICT labour is needed (Goodwin, 2007).

Drawing on the relative importance of the Swedish and German ICT industry, the shortage creates certain struggles on the job market. In Sweden, the shortage of ICT professionals such as systems analysts and software developers is still increasing (Attström et al., 2014). A forecast by Empirica estimates that the shortage of skilled ICT professionals will grow to 57.000 by 2020 (Empirica, 2014b). In Germany the lack of skilled applicants is not as severe but is working against the ICT industry, not allowing to unleash its full potential (Bitkom, 2014; PwC, 2016). By the end of 2014 nearly 40.000 ICT-experts were missing (Bitkom,

2014) and recent forecasts estimate that this shortage will grow by 2020 to 156.000 (Empirica, 2014b).

Given the continuing shortage, both countries on a governmental level are actively trying to attract foreign professionals in the ICT sector (Swedish Institute, 2016; Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie, 2016). Moreover, they adopt policies to create more ICT innovation capabilities (Empirica, 2014a). However, these measures are presumably not enough to solve the shortage in the short-term. Despite this, companies in need for ICT professionals already started to change their recruitment activities. Employers started several mitigation strategies that include in-house training and education next to a stronger focus on professionals from abroad (Attström et al., 2014; Goodwin, 2007). Hence, companies started to recruit professionals from within the European Union and outside. At this, Swedish companies are even explicitly extending its focus by “*targeting high skilled asylum seekers for training and recruitment*” (Attström et al., 2014, p.65).

Linked to our research, it can be assumed that the current situation is accelerating the diversification of ICT companies as more employees from abroad could be entering the job market to fill existing demand gap. Henceforth, our research is picking up the current market development and tries to find out what are the consequences for the companies that are more and more confronted with multicultural teams. The paper studies an industry that already has a high level of cultural interconnection, as ICT companies are often up to create junctures between existing international branches, and that now is under increasing pressure to diversify even more (Goodwin, 2007).

1.4.3 Refugee crisis

During the year 2015 the European Union experienced a dense year in its immigration history. Arguably, Sweden and Germany both played a pivotal role. Sweden, despite its relative small population, is the country in the EU that took the most refugees per capita (McCarthy, 2015). Until recently, Sweden sustained the most open and liberal migration policy in the EU. Germany has become a country popular as migration goal as well, domiciling more than one million refugees in 2015. Both countries are arguably the two European countries trying harder to ease a humanitarian crisis mainly triggered by war in Syria. Presumably, the great influx of people does not happen unnoticed by the Swedish and

German labour markets. Given the fact that both countries are among those with the shortest waiting period for entering the job market, it can be argued that the influx of refugees creates certain potentials for the ICT industry (Dumont & Pain, 2015). Our research incorporates these circumstances, by evaluating companies' openness and perspective on multicultural team and the idea of finding potential employees among the refugees.

1.5 Research Purpose

Drawing from this development, it becomes reasonable that ICT companies, whether in Sweden or Germany, are likely to become more international and diverse in the future, which brings us to our research purpose. The current circumstances stress the need to learn more about how ICT companies in both countries assess the performance and fruitfulness of multicultural teams. As job seekers from around the world represent an opportunity for an understaffed ICT labor market, they bring along their individual culture, norms and values that companies can take advantage of.

Hence, the paper's purpose is to understand how people working in the HR of ICT firms perceive, experience and handle multicultural teams. Analysing the standpoint of those professionals and HR related personnel on the skill shortage will help to get an additional understanding on how the industry assesses and confronts the current ICT labour market. Moreover, the research allows detecting untapped potential and eventually providing insights on how to use it to ease the shortage. Putting into consideration what academia offers when it comes to multicultural team in Swedish and German ICT companies, the specific knowledge is very limited. Existing studies refer either to the effects of multicultural teams in general or are bound to a specific case.

The purpose is made of two distinct goals. Firstly, we wanted to understand whether companies in ICT are knowledgeable of benefits or downsides of multicultural teams, thus assessing their awareness. Secondly, we wanted to study how this awareness is implemented in the processes of hiring, team creation and team development.

1.6 Research Questions

Through its research questions, the study wants to create a deeper understanding on multicultural teams in the ICT field. This let us to confront the academic sphere with the industry's reality. Therefore, the research aims to create some new knowledge around what role multiculturalism plays in ICT companies. Furthermore, the research allowed us to test two hypotheses. The first hypothesis used the knowledge gained out of the research questions, and allowed us to learn more about the companies' intrinsic motivation in hiring. The second hypothesis enabled us to learn more about the countries differences.

The questions that drove this research are, among the others: Are multicultural teams a goal or a by-product? Are people hired for their multicultural background or are they hired only based on their skills? Do human resources and managers consider these aspects while assembling teams? Are they aware of the positive effects of a multicultural team? When hiring new people is some consideration going into the culture of an individual and the effects that this can have on team performance?

Answering those questions, directly through survey and interviews or as research question, provided understanding of how a company regards multicultural teams and what is the industry's or country's trend on awareness and implementation.

Question 1:

Are tech- companies aware of the additional potential advantages that a multicultural team can generate? And are they generally satisfied with that level?

Question 2:

Are the companies' efforts towards multiculturalism different during the hiring, team composition, team building phases?

Question 3:

How high is the cultural awareness in companies? And does a general correlation (or trend) between cultural awareness and implementation of multicultural teams exist?

Question 4:

How do companies evaluate themselves regarding cultural awareness and cultural diversity implementation?

Question 1 and 2 focus mainly on the awareness of ICT companies and on the potential advantages of multicultural teams. The advantages at hand were presented in the best available knowledge chapter and offer a great set of motivational factors to put greater efforts into the diversification of tech-companies. The first question aims to learn more about the motivation of companies to invest into multicultural teams, if they can name the motivating factors shared by the optimistic group and if there is knowledge of the best practices to manage those teams well. The second questions aims to discover if cultural diversity is differently pursued in the three phases listed.

Question 3 and 4 concentrates more on the company's own perception in terms of how good they implement multicultural teams and how aware they are regarding cultural awareness. Starting from this, the questions open the opportunity to indicate if the industry or specific companies are progressive, backward, or indifferent about implementing cultural diversity.

1.7 Hypothesis

Next to the research question, we defined two hypotheses that allow us to learn under which premises multicultural teams come into existence and what role a country's mind-set plays in forming these teams.

In the first hypothesis, we estimate that multicultural teams in ICT companies evolve organically.

Hypothesis 1:

Multicultural teams are created to accomplish a task rather than to generate the positive side effects of multicultural teams. Multicultural teams are neither guided nor encouraged by specific managerial interventions.

Therefore, our paper wants to test how consciously companies create multicultural teams. According to our first hypothesis we expect that multiculturalism is treated as a means but not as an end, expressing that multiculturalism is rather a by-product than a goal.

For our second focus on country differences we anticipate that Swedish companies, with their more progressive perspective on multiculturalism, are more inclined and open for multicultural teams compared to German.

Hypothesis 2:

Swedish companies are more open than German companies to consider the employment of people with different cultural background and to implement multicultural teams.

The hypothesis was created because Sweden and Germany are perceived differently when it comes to tolerating different cultures and handling uncertainty (Roth & Hertzberg, 2010; Mühe, 2010). While Sweden in the recent Eurobarometer “Discrimination in the EU in 2015” ranks as being the most open country to work with different people, whether in terms of their ethnic origin, religious background, sexual orientation, or age, Germany is positioned in the European mid-range (TNS Opinion & Social, 2015). Arguably, these differences and especially the first two, might influence the respective companies’ propensity to create multicultural teams. Moreover, our countries of choice handle uncertainty differently, according to studies from the Hofstede Centre (2016a; 2016b). Applied to our research, we suppose that the different level of uncertainty avoidance has an additional influence on the openness towards multiculturalism. At this, unfamiliar cultures in a team might increase the level of uncertainty for other team members (The Hofstede Centre, 2016a; 2016b). We posit that Sweden with a rather low score of uncertainty avoidance (29 points) is more open-minded towards an increase of cultural diversity at the workplace than Germany with a preference for uncertainty avoidance (65 points) (The Hofstede Centre, 2016a; 2016b). Overall, in multicultural teams both these factors come into play. Working with colleagues with different cultural backgrounds demands individuals to be open for other perspectives. These might be conflictive to oneself and create new uncertainties. The hypothesis wants to understand, if given these differences, both countries have miscellaneous perspectives on multicultural teams or not.

2 Methodology

This following chapter presents the paper's research framework that allows us to critically answer the research questions and verify the outlined hypotheses. This part comprises four sub-chapters. Firstly, the research paradigms and its school of thought. Secondly, the research design, outlining the general structure of the research conducted. Thirdly, the research methods, with the twofold data collection process and the reasoning behind. Fourthly, the data analysis. Overall, the different chapters contain a critical reflection of its purpose, and at the same time tries to draw upon its own limitations.

2.1 Research Paradigm

The paper's research is conducted through the lenses of the constructivists. The idea is to try to describe the situation and figure out what is the role of multicultural teams in the industry. By espousing the ideas of constructivism, more precisely social constructivism, our research assesses the paper's main topic of diversity and multicultural teams as a mere social phenomenon that is created and sustained by individual social actors (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Accordingly, the social actors in this case are the employees of a company involved in our research, communicating their own subjective perspectives on the questions asked. The perspective taken is seen as the experience gained by an individual (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Experiences, a product of a reflective mind-set and introspection (Gosling & Mintzberg, 2003), allow individuals to add a certain meaning to these experiences. The subjective and individualistic nature of creating the meaning of an experience considerably varies the outcome, making it a social construction (Creswell, 2014). Moreover, the research focuses on teams and multiculturalism which are themselves highly interactive entities; as such they are influenced by the respective cultural norms and values owned by the individuals allowing the previous concepts to be created. Under these circumstances, the social constructivism's view demands to appreciate every individual insight on what role multicultural teams play in their environment (Creswell, 2014). The chosen paradigm therefore evaluates the research, revolving around the notion of diversity and culture, as an ambiguous set of diverging realities. The realities meet each other when individuals interact face-to-face or through other settings (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

2.2 Research Design

In order to learn more about how ICT companies in Sweden and Germany perceive the role of multicultural teams and their performance, it becomes vital to learn more from those who are part of it. Given the richness of factors that interplay when teams are working together, ranging from different personalities, cultures, norms, values, perception etc. we decided to develop our research through a mixed method approach.

The worldview of the constructivists leads us to stress the importance of our qualitative research. Our objective is therefore to assess through the qualitative research how individuals interpret cultural differences at the workplace in action (Creswell, 2014). However, the research intended to put a greater attention on the quantitative research dimension in order to collect a large sample of data since we chose to study a large industry in two countries.

By incorporating quantitative and qualitative research elements, the mixed method was chosen as we assumed to get a wider and more complete perspective on our research topic than what one single approach can deliver (Creswell, 2014). Hence, the quantitative research is used to facilitate the qualitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Furthermore, the mixed approach was chosen since the quantitative research has its limitations when it comes to understanding social interactions in-depth (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

2.3 Research Methods

The paper follows a twofold data collection approach. Firstly, an online questionnaire is submitted to selected companies to get a general overview on multicultural teams in ICT companies. Secondly, in-depth interviews are conducted to learn more in detail how individuals in such companies assess multicultural teams and its future importance for the respective company. Based on the online questionnaire a Matrix Framework was proposed, allowing companies to assess their own level of multicultural team's awareness and implementation.

Lastly, the paper uses a country comparison (comparative method) to test the paper's second hypothesis. This chapter will shortly introduce the reasoning behind these methods and how we used them expediently, helping us to answer our research question and hypotheses.

2.3.1 Quantitative research

The first part of the research was conducted through an online questionnaire. The goal of the survey was to gather information and a general idea of the industry in regards of the multicultural teams. The questionnaire is divided into three categories, composing questions related to: (1) general insights (2) performance (3) culture. The first set of question aims to get a better insight on the extent companies already consider, promote, and perceive multicultural teams. The second set, by contrast, seeks to learn more about how individuals perceive the performance of multicultural teams. Lastly, the questionnaire wants to learn more about how the companies deal with cultural differences and in how far they are prepared and trained in taking advantage out of the multicultural setting. Altogether, the questions asked are created to learn more about either the companies' awareness on multicultural teams or their level of implementation.

Given the questionnaires limited ability to interfere when more ambiguous questions are asked, the survey was developed under close scrutiny to eliminate possible inconsistencies and obscurities (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Hence, the questions were created under the pretext to be self-explanatory. If it was perceived as beneficial further clarifications of the questions were given. The questions asked are mainly closed questions and easy to answer. That being so, the closed-ended questions underline the survey's quantitative approach (Creswell, 2014). The questionnaire is kept relatively short and is intended to be easy to follow in order to not provoke a respondent's fatigue, which could ultimately induce a participant to discontinue the questionnaire before completion (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Generally, the questionnaire was set up under the purpose to gain greater insight on the status of multicultural teams in ICT companies. Consequently, the questions are either aligned or stay in direct relation with the research question or hypothesis (Bryman & Bell, 2011). That being so, the quantitative research part will allow us to get the first insights needed for answering our research question and to critically test the hypotheses (Creswell, 2014).

The questionnaire was created on the platform [soscisurvey.de](https://www.soscisurvey.de). The platform gave us complete customisability of the questions and complete access to the collected data. This allowed us to choose for each formulated question the appropriate presentation form. The codes used in the

research follow the question order and ID tag of the survey, they are not ascending in a straight numerical order (i.e. PF35 followed by PF02, see Table 3 in chapter 3).

2.3.1.1 Targeted Profession

The questionnaire was submitted to people in the human resources department and team managers after a prior call. To address the possible lack of such figures in smaller companies, we extended to managerial figures playing a part in the hiring process or with a complete knowledge of the hiring policies of the company. Those are seen as the most valuable target group, due to their important role during recruitment, team composition, and team building activities. Nonetheless, every individual received the same questionnaire and was allowed to answer all questions given, specifying their position in the survey.

2.3.1.2 Targeted Companies

The questionnaire was submitted to Swedish and German companies working in the ICT industry. The study assessed companies as being a tech company when their main field of operation was in the realm of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) or a subgroup predominantly conducting ICTs tasks. The survey notably received feedback out of Software Engineering 45%, Hardware Engineering 20%, IT-Services 22%, Consulting 31% and Others 31% (see Table 1). Under the label of “others”, some notable examples are Game Development, Communication, and research institutes. The respondents were allowed to choose more options if needed.

Table 1: Respondents’ Field of Operations

PF21		Software Engineering	Hardware Engineering	IT-Services	IT-Consulting	Others ...	Total
In which area(s) is your company mainly operating in? (Multiple answers possible)		22	10	11	11	15	49
In total %		45%	20%	22%	22%	31%	100%
		Among others: Game Development, Applied Science, ...					

2.3.1.3 Limitations

Although the survey was critically built and tested by several test-candidates to limit the questionnaire inner fallacies that could lead to misinterpretations and misconceptions, the questionnaire was not completely filled out by all participants asked. Giving the possibility to

skip some questions was considered an incentive to complete the survey; nonetheless the complete response rate was around 40%. Out of about 200 companies we contacted, 93 opened the survey, 49 provided analysable data and 39 responded to every question.

The main pitfalls of surveys are in the question themselves. Trying to avoid biased response is mandatory and looking for confirmation of an assumption will turn the survey towards that end. Therefore the survey is aimed, with its design, to not point towards one position but rather to put the subject in front of a choice that allows the maximal objectivism possible. To avoid general optimism or negativism the survey did not feature questions with a range between two values, but rather a choice of order of importance, yes/no questions and yes/no questions with an open slot to add further details.

An additional limitation affecting the survey, even if remote, is that there is no absolute certainty of the identity of the respondent. The survey was submitted through email after a phone call, which should ensure that the survey was filled in by the correct person. Nonetheless, in some occasion a CEO or a manager might have delegated the survey to another person.

2.3.2 Qualitative research

The second part of the research was a more detailed analysis of some of the results. This was carried out through unstructured interviews of managers and people who have a say in hiring. The goal was to gather detailed data which in the survey would be qualitative. The importance of going into a qualitative study of some case is related to understanding why some actions are carried out, and perspectives are taken. The interviews were conducted by using as much open-ended questions as possible. This choice was made in order to minimise frictions and to encourage the interviewee to open up. The circumstance that the majority of the interview partners were no strangers, meaning that one of us had already personal or professional contact prior to the interview, allowed us to have easy-going “conversations” without stressing the interview character too much. Drawing on our constructivists view, the interviews’ setting let us claim that all participants present their individual reality: a product of every individual’s culture, social and historical perspective (Creswell, 2014). In contrast, closed questions and a structured interview would have limited the potential to gain greater insights on the different realities. Such interviews do not allow anything other than predefined

questions asked into a distinct setting and context (Creswell, 2014). All interviews conducted were unstructured. To try to gather valuable insights on our topic, we also tried to introduce some ideas to get their perspective on the matter. Those ideas covered: the future of the company, how to deal with shortage, possible switch in the company culture, discrimination, cultural awareness, and multiculturalism. The questions asked were mostly informal and varied from one interview to another (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

2.3.2.1 Limitations

Regardless of the interviews setting that was chosen, it is not unobjectionable. The gathered data are interpreted through and with our own created reality that is ditto a product of our own backgrounds and experiences (Creswell, 2014). Nonetheless, given the fact that in some occasions we were familiar with our respective interview partners, it felt relatively easy to hold an unstructured interview. The interviews were conducted following a almost conversational structure in which the respondent is to be encouraged to talk about his or her experiences when it comes to multicultural teams. As interviewers we did not interrupt the participants in case of smaller debaucheries. We therefore tried to get a better picture of the individual's own perspective by not stopping him or her in their expressed thoughts. A limitation of this approach is that sometimes the respondents went off topic.

Another limitation could be that some interviews had to be translated from German to English. The translation could have taken away the personal touch and meaning of the feedback given. Notwithstanding, we regard the possibility that the content might have been adulterated as very limited, as the answers did not gave room for interpretation.

2.3.3 Framework creation

To facilitate the analysis of the data a Matrix Framework was created. This matrix features two axes representing the knowledge of the benefits of a multicultural team (High Awareness, Low Awareness) and the implementation of this knowledge in the recruiting process (High Implementation, Low Implementation). This matrix allows to rapidly account and describe a company's, and to a certain extent, an industry's position on multicultural teams. Moreover, it allowed us to detect appropriate interview participants for the qualitative analysis. The interviewees were part of the groups featuring High Knowledge since the "unaware" will not

be able to provide reasoning or an understanding of the situation due to the unawareness of the pro and cons.

Those results provide a generalisable situation that may extend to the whole industry, not only the Swedish and German. The findings could be also generalisable to other industries, but that needs further study since the ICT industry relies heavily on unique talent. To get those talents culture might play a secondary role compared to the skill required (Attström et al., 2014).

2.3.4 The comparative method

In order to answer our second hypothesis (chapter 1.7) we decided to use a comparative study approach. It is a widely used method in political science and allows comparing two countries and learning more about their cultural similarities and differences (Hantrais, 1996; Finifter, 1993). For our research we consider Sweden and Germany as two systems in a similar situation when it comes to the vital role of their ICT sector, the remarkable gap in skilled labour and their role in the refugee crisis. As aforementioned, the two countries show in these respects great similarities. Nonetheless, we as well envisage that Sweden and Germany have different perspectives on multicultural teams. Our reasoning is based on the countries diverging openness on plurality as hypothesised in the second hypothesis (Roth & Hertzberg, 2010; Mühe, 2010). The comparative method provides us with an analytical framework, through which we can test our second hypothesis (Hantrais, 1996).

2.4 Data Analysis Theory

Given that our mixed approach data were gathered in different times, the analysis of the data was also split in two moments.

The first moment of the analysis focused on the survey data that produced two important results. The first, and probably more important, is what enabled answering the research questions and categorising each company according to the matrix we designed. The second was a pool of names which have been contacted to schedule an interview according to their expressed will in participating.

The second moment of the analysis was the elaboration of the interviews, which meant transcribing the recordings and producing a list of bullet points summarizing the highlights of

those interviews. To answer the appropriate research questions, the insights from the interviews were used to validate the hypothesis or simply get a deeper understanding of some of the survey's results

2.4.1 Surveys question and interview analysis rationale

The survey questions also enabled to answer the research questions. In this occasion, the results are a straightforward representation of the answers provided. We calculated the results as percentage of the respondents for every single question. We then presented an account for both the countries and the average result. A detailed account of the survey question, page by page, is featured in the appendices (Appendix B); the results are sorted in the proper paragraph in the data analysis chapter (chapter 3) where they are grouped according to which research question they related to.

The interviews were summarised in bullet points representing the highlights of each. Every particular interview, being in an open format, was different and brought up different insights. A detailed account of those highlights is featured in the appendices (Appendix A), while the additional insight gained are listed in the proper chapter according to which research questions they related to.

Table 2: Survey Questions and Usage in Research Questions (RQ) and Hypothesis (HY)

PF	Content	RQ	1	2	3	4	HY	1	2
20	In which of the following areas are you active (or play a role) in?	x							
21	In which area(s) is your company mainly operating in?								
35	Where is your company based?								
2	Would you consider your company to be multiculturally diverse?			x					
27	How many teams in your company are multicultural?			x					
15	How are the effects of cultural differences on teams?	x							
	How would you assess the role of multicultural diversity on team performance in regards of :								
5	Group-produced outputs	x							
37	Influences on group members	x							
38	Team capability to perform better in the future	x							
11	According to your knowledge, which teams perform better?	x						x	
	How would you assess the company's orientation								
6	In the hiring process ...		x					x	
7	When creating a new team ...		x					x	
8	For team development ...		x					x	
9	Do you promote teams with similar or diverse cultural background?		x						
13	Does a multicultural team perform better than a team with the same cultural background?	x							
16	Do you consider your company's knowledge about how to handle multicultural teams as sufficient?	x							
32	How would you assess the level of "cultural awareness" in your company?	x	x						
33	Do you think that the level of cultural awareness allows the company to create cultural synergies?	x	x						
18	Overall, are you satisfied with the company's efforts when it comes to diversity management?	x							
23	How would you position your company on the Awareness/Implementation Matrix				x				x

2.4.2 Matrix Rationale

To fully understand the rationale behind the analysis we need to recall the two values on our matrix: Awareness and Implementation. The first represents the awareness of the benefits of multicultural teams and latter represents the implementation of that knowledge through the creation of multicultural teams. Every question featured in the matrix was selected among the whole survey; the criterion for election was that the question should be clearly accountable as being about either awareness or implementation. Other questions, for example the ones regarding the company name or number of employee were not rated on those two values. The questions used for the matrix were the following: PF 27, 15, 05, 37, 38, 11, 06, 07, 08, 09, 13, 32, 33, 18. The number of questions accounting for Awareness were 8 (PF 27, 15, 05, 37, 38, 13, 32, 32), the ones for Implementation 6 (PF 27, 6, 7, 8, 9, 18).

Every question was considered as a yes/no question even if the question featured various degrees of yes's and no's. This was done to simplify the understanding of the data and the matrix. To do this the answer was translated in numbers: 0 if the answer was negative (negative awareness, or negative implementation) and 1 if it was positive.

This analysis produced a matrix with eight maximum points on one axis and six on the other, to transfer those numbers and make them more understandable we translated every score in a percentage of the maximum score attainable. To avoid falsifying the averages with questions skipped by the respondents, the scores were calculated as percentages of the total questions answered for each category.

As mentioned, we also featured a self-assessment test (chapter 3.1.4) with the same matrix frame to spice things up. The respondents could position a marker on the matrix, stating where their company was located. The comparison between the results the self-assessment and the matrix might display some differences. This might be because what we considered a high level, of implementation/awareness in our matrix, is not necessarily representative of what the respondents believe.

3 Data Analysis

Table 3: Survey's Question Tag (PF) and Order (QNr)

QNr	PF	Content
1	20	In which of the following areas are you active (or play a role) in?
2	21	In which area(s) is your company mainly operating in?
3	35	Where is your company based?
4	2	Would you consider your company to be multiculturally diverse?
5	27	How many teams in your company are multicultural?
7	15	How are the effects of cultural differences on teams?
		How would you assess the role of multicultural diversity on team performance in regards of :
8	5	Group-produced outputs
9	37	Influences on group members
10	38	Team capability to perform better in the future
11	11	According to your knowledge, which teams perform better?
		How would you assess the company's orientation
12	6	In the hiring process ...
13	7	When creating a new team ...
14	8	For team development ...
15	9	Do you promote teams with similar or diverse cultural background?
16	13	Does a multicultural team perform better than a team with the same cultural background?
18	16	Do you consider your company's knowledge about how to handle multicultural teams as sufficient?
19	32	How would you assess the level of "cultural awareness" in your company?
20	33	Do you think that the level of cultural awareness allows the company to create cultural synergies?
21	18	Overall, are you satisfied with the company's efforts when it comes to diversity management?
22	23	How would you position your company on the Awareness/Implementation Matrix

The analysis will follow a structure presenting first the research question and the survey questions (see Table 2 and 3) that allowed us to answer those. In the table, marked in grey, are the questions grouped together. All the percentages reported are rounded, in some scenarios the total percentages of the respondents might sum up over 100%, it is not a mistake but simple rounding. The numbers in brackets refer to the respective interview.

Table 4: Interviews' Details

Nr.	Say in Hiring	Personnel responsibility	Country
1	yes	yes	Germany
2	yes	yes	Germany
3	yes	yes	Sweden
4	no	no	Germany
5	yes	yes	Germany
6	yes	yes	Germany
7	yes	yes	Sweden

3.1 Answering the Research Questions

3.1.1 Awareness of the advantages and satisfaction

Question 1:

Are tech- companies aware of the additional potential advantages that a multicultural team can generate? And are they generally satisfied with that level?

Survey Question: 5,37,38,11,13,16,32,33;

The first research questions addresses the general knowledge regarding multicultural teams, which school it side with and if there is satisfaction in those regards, PF 5/37/38 was aimed to collect the evaluations of multicultural teams regarding three subjects: outputs, influences on the group members and capability of future improvement. The results are coherent displaying only between 2% and 7% of the respondents defining these fields as “negative”. While nobody defined it “very negative”, a range between 20% and 27% was neutral and between 66% and 76% of the respondents defined those as either positive or very positive. The majority of those respondents selected the “positive” option (39-46%) while only when considering the future projections a slight majority (39% vs 37%) opted for the “very positive” option.

The next question (PF11) was directly asking which kind of team performed better according to the respondent’s experience. Here 61% of the respondents opted for the better performance

of a heterogeneous team, 32% considered them on the same level and a 7% opted for the homogeneous team. Later on the survey we asked confirmation for this result in PF13, rephrasing the question with some academic backup (Di Stefano & Maznevski, 2010) and removing the “neutral” option. Surprisingly enough, most of the neutrals moved towards a negative result implying disagreeing on the fact that multicultural team perform better. This resulted in an agreement rate of 73% and disagreement of 28%.

Table 5: Performance

PF11		Homogeneous	Neutral	Heterogeneous	Total
		3	13	25	41
In total %		7%	32%	61%	100%
According to your knowledge, which teams perform better?	Sweden	2	4	13	19
		11%	21%	68%	100%
	Germany	1	9	12	22
		5%	41%	55%	100%

Proceeding, the survey addressed the level of satisfaction on the company’s knowledge regarding the handling of multicultural teams. First, in PF16, was asked if there is a satisfactory level of this knowledge. The 68% of the respondents claimed it was insufficient and up to the individuals without clear company’s guidelines, the remaining 33% claimed to be satisfied and that the company is actively involved in producing material to help. At this point something odd showed up in the analysis of PF32, where the respondents were asked to rate the level of “cultural awareness” in the company with the option to state it is: insufficient, low, acceptable, outstanding, or “no idea”. Surprisingly here the respondents preferring to avoid to take a clear position were only 3%. While nobody used the “insufficient” box, 13% opted for low, 18% for “outstanding” and the majority consisting of a 69% opted for “acceptable”. At first glance the results of PF16 and PF32 might seem contradicting. The discrepancy is easily levelled considering that PF16 addressed the involvement of the company in deploying the awareness, while PF32 is an assessment of the actual level cleared of the company’s effort and up to the individuals. Meaning that 69% deem acceptable the level of awareness, but insufficient the company’s effort in those regards. The last of the survey questions involved in our research question 1, PF33, has more managerial implications. The questions asked if the respondents considered cultural awareness as enabler of cultural synergies. Surprisingly 28% of the respondents believe that is not enough, the remaining 72% instead are more positive. While the percentage of PF33 is clearly positive,

the 28% representing the negative is still a large portion considering the simple awareness as insufficient.

Integrating to those data the results from the interviews what we gathered is that the awareness comes principally from the education and secondarily from direct working experience (all interviews except Interviewee 2).

Table 6: Awareness and Synergy

PF33		Negative		Positive	Total
		11		28	39
Do you think that the level of cultural awareness allows the company to create cultural synergies? (Cultural synergies can be created when employees accept and appreciate existing cultural differences and use them to produce creative and effective solutions) Cultural awareness used	In total %	28%		72%	100%
	Sweden	5		13	18
		28%		72%	100%
	Germany	6		15	21
		29%		71%	100%

Generally, answering the research question, the respondents possess high knowledge of the benefits of the multicultural teams, and only a low percentage is more inclined towards homogeneous teams.

Regarding satisfaction, it appears that there is a general lack of appropriate knowledge, considered acceptable, but not optimal. Nonetheless it seems that simple awareness might not be the panacea for the cultural diversity issue.

3.1.2 Different efforts in hiring, team composition and development

Question 2:

Are the companies' efforts towards multiculturalism different during the hiring, team composition, team building phases?

Survey Question: 6,7,8,9,15

To answer to the research question 2 the survey proposed three questions directly aimed at the three moments of a team: hiring (PF06), team composition (PF07) and team development (PF08). The purpose was to assess if the cultural background played a role in those three phases, and if it played a different role in each of the phases. While it was possible to determine that culture indeed plays a role in all three the phases it was impossible, in the survey, to determine the importance in absolute terms. Relatively to the skills and knowledge, culture always plays a secondary role but it still plays a role: between 24% and 29% of the respondents claimed it plays a role in all the three phases. Skills and knowledge dominate the

phases, with respondents positioning it as a fundamental with scores ranging from 87% to 97%. Only 16% of the respondents selected the “other” option, specifying the importance of factors as personality, age, cultural fit and values. A number worth noting is that 42% of the respondents mentioned “gender” as an important factor in the hiring process.

To deepen the understanding of the situation and gain additional insight on the role played by the culture in these three phases, the interviews result valuable. The picture drawn from the interviews is that culture plays a role as an extra value, but it comes in play only if the person has already a complete profile according to skills, education and work experience. Only after the fulfilment of those requirements the cultural background might play a role in the hiring process. As gathered from the survey, and confirmed by the interviews, there are no different efforts in the three phases cited: there is no diversification.

3.1.3 Cultural awareness and level of implementation

Question 3:

How high is the cultural awareness in companies? And does a general correlation (or trend) between cultural awareness and implementation of multicultural teams exist?

Survey Question: 32,33,23,27,2;

Coming to the third research question, the focus shifted to the rather loose and volatile concept of cultural awareness (Pitts, 2006). Drawing from the surveys, the respondents demonstrated an acceptable (68%) and outstanding (18%) level of cultural awareness in their companies (PF32). Arguably, the strong positive response (86%) on cultural awareness holds a great potential for a company to create cultural synergies. In fact, the survey reveals that 72% of the participants assess their company's potential to create synergies out of the awareness (PF33).

Table 7: Cultural Awareness

PF32		Insufficient	Low	No idea	Acceptable	Exceptional	Total
		0	5	1	27	7	39
In total %		0%	13%	3%	69%	18%	103%
How would you assess the level of "cultural awareness" in your company? Level of cultural awareness							
	Sweden		1	0	15	3	19
		0%	5%	0%	79%	16%	100%
		5%			95%		
	Germany		4	1	12	4	21
		0%	19%	5%	57%	19%	100%
		19%			76%		

Moreover, considering this perspective along multicultural team’s performance (PF15/05/37/38/11), companies might not take full advantage of the co-workers “knowledge”. While more than 75% of the survey participants assess their company as multicultural diverse (PF02), it is interesting to see that the presence of diverse teams in companies is limited. For example, the share of multicultural teams on the total, looks like the following (PF27): roughly 64% of the companies states to have half or less than half of the teams characterized by cultural diversity, while only 35% of the companies have more than half of their teams with multiculturalism. Combining PF02 and PF27 we can argue that the companies tend to overestimate their level of multiculturalism. Presumably, the question PF02, asking for a company being diverse or not, gives room for errors as, as the notion of cultural diversity can be interpreted differently.

Table 8: Multiculturalism

PF02		No	Yes	Total
		6	39	45
In total %		13%	87%	100%
Would you consider your company to be multiculturally diverse?				
	Sweden	5	15	20
		25%	75%	100%
	Germany	1	24	25
		4%	96%	100%

Table 9: Numbers of Multicultural Teams

PF27		< 25%	25% -50%	50%	50% - 75%	> 75%	Total
		12	11	6	6	10	45
In total %		27%	24%	13%	13%	22%	100%
		51%			36%		
Roughly, how many teams in your company are multicultural (people with different cultural backgrounds working together)?	Sweden	5	4	2	4	5	20
		25%	20%	10%	20%	25%	100%
		45%			45%		
	Germany	7	7	4	2	5	25
		28%	28%	16%	8%	20%	100%
		56%			28%		

Consequently, the in-depth interviews allowed us to gain additional insights on the issue. Overall, all respondents attested their company to have a sufficient amount of cultural awareness. This can be used to let someone grow individually or in team (Interviews 4,5,6). Nonetheless, one interviewee talked about an incident in which a former parent company was unaware of the culture differences between the German and Russian branch. The German business, managed by a Danish CEO through Russian ownership was, according to the interviewee, doomed to fail from the beginning. The lacking cultural awareness led to bigger discords in the company. Soon after buying the company the Russian investor sold it again to a German ICT consultancy firm. The company conducted with the new owner its business in Germany and, according to the interviewee, is now back on track when it comes to cultural awareness. Nonetheless, the interviewee admitted that cultural awareness has something to do with experience, either you have it or not; learning to be more aware is rather a tricky thing to learn (Interview 1).

Coming to the implementation side, the interviews gave a similar response to the survey. While the interviews did not ask for the specific numbers of multicultural teams, it became apparent that many individuals saw more potential in those kind of teams, and a need to increase the level of multiculturalism in their company (Interview 2,3,4,5,7). More dubious about increasing multiculturalism was interviewee 1. Here, the motive for resistance is not rooted in the cultural differences but on possible language barriers, something that was considered a reason behind less diverse teams by all the respondents.

By merging all the insights gained, the overall cultural awareness of companies is regarded as above average. Although the results might be assessed as less persuasive or even superficial, the broadness of the concept of cultural awareness does not allow the study to draw stronger conclusion. However, by combining the question with the observed level of implementation,

meaning the extent to which teams are multicultural, it becomes reasonable that no direct correlation between awareness and implementation exists.

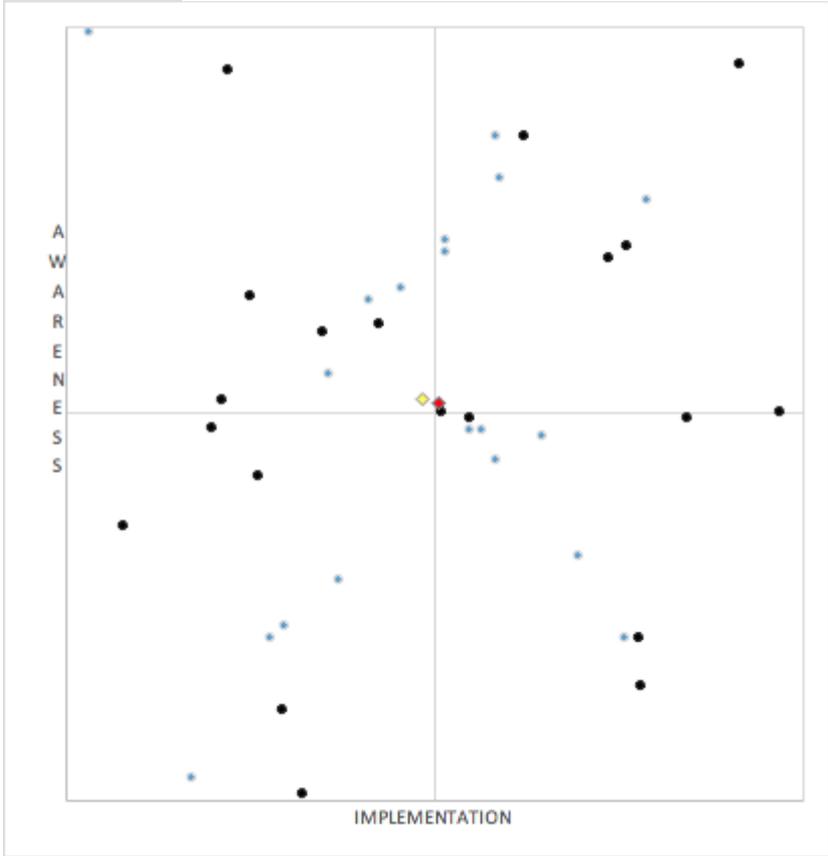
3.1.4 Self-assessment evaluation

Question 4:

How do companies evaluate themselves regarding cultural awareness and cultural diversity implementation?

Survey Question 23

Table 10: Self-Assessment Test



To answer our fourth research questions a self-assessment test, displaying our matrix, was submitted at the end of the survey. The respondents were equally divided between Germany and Sweden. In the picture above is a representation of where the respondents positioned themselves: black representing Germany and blue representing Sweden, while the yellow dot is the average of the Swedish companies and the red one is for the German ones. As visible in the appendix (Appendix B, Figure 11) the matrix proposed was the same, featuring the high value on the top and on the right, and the low in the bottom and left. The differences between the two countries, regarding the self-assessment are close to zero, and as a general trend there seems to be a scarcity of companies claiming to have high awareness and very low implementation (top left quadrant). The majority of the respondents are still positioning themselves in the central area avoiding the low-low quadrant.

However, our analysis of the survey questions produced a different result. Before was described the method of analysis of those questions. The results, accounting every respondent, produced a level of Awareness of 49% and Implementation of 36%. However, some of the respondents answered only few questions of the ones selected. To avoid imbalances coming from those respondents we decided to take out of our calculation respondents who did not answer at least three of the selected questions. This was done to avoid results displaying for example 100% on one value simply because the respondent answer only one of the question selected. The final results without the incomplete data give a level of awareness of 70% and a level of implementation of 43%. Looking in detail how the two countries performed on this test, it is notable the difference between how Swedish companies were categorised compared to the German. The average awareness for Germany was 63% while for Sweden it is 79%. While the implementation positioned Sweden on a 51% and Germany on a 38%.

As these numbers are the products of an original matrix system, we tried to gather more information to confirm or deny the validity of those results. The results of the interviews suggest that those two numbers might be both right and wrong. Regarding the level of awareness they appear to be close to what we encountered during our interviews, and eventually to the entirety of the sample. While for Swedish companies the degree of implementation seems to be too optimistic. The real percentage of implementation, as found during the interviews, appeared closer to the level of the German companies for both the countries. The gap might come from the fact that, in our data, the company size did not weight in the calculations. Therefore a small company, with a few employees and low

implementation had the same relevance as a big multinational corporation who has high implementation.

3.2 Hypotheses Verification

3.2.1 Employed as a mean, not as an end

Hypothesis 1:

Multicultural teams are created to accomplish a task rather than to generate the positive side effects of multicultural teams. Multicultural teams are neither guided nor encouraged by specific managerial interventions.

Survey Question 6, 7, 8

The results suggest that cultural diversity is obtained as a product of the hiring process in order to accomplish a task, rather than the main goal. Through questions 6, 7, and 8 as mentioned in paragraph 3.2 it is possible to outline the different level of importance of skills and culture in the process of hiring, team composition and team development. The most useful insight regarding this first hypothesis comes from the interviews. In fact, getting in touch with people who have a say in hiring allowed for a deeper analysis of those mechanics. As a result, all the interviews confirmed that the primary role is always played by skill and knowledge, while cultural background and attitude are secondary.

A notable point that rose during all the interviews, even if using different wordings, was that having people with a diverse culture has economic benefits. Some interviewee addressed the issue as merely economical: you get better access to those (foreign) markets; others outlined the importance of having the same culture in communication with a certain ethnic group. While this concept of “economical” return was mentioned in all the interviews, more than 50% stated this only as a favourable extra, not as a primary benefit. Nonetheless, 50% stated they are really inclined to hire multicultural people for other benefits, and nobody was open to sacrifice some of the skills and knowledge for a diverse cultural background. Overall, this hypothesis finds confirmation. It appears that at the moment, in the sample analysed, there is not clear intention on trading part of the skills for a diverse culture.

3.2.2 Country comparison

Hypothesis 2:

Swedish companies are more open than German companies to consider the employment of people with different cultural background and to implement multicultural teams.

Survey Question 23, 15

Coming to the country comparison, our research was unable to show any form of evidence that would allow us to validate the hypothesis 2. In order to answer the hypothesis we split the survey results between Swedish and German contributions. Starting at the country's respective cultural awareness, a potential prerequisite needed to form well functioning multicultural teams (Pitts, 2006), Swedish companies assess their respective level of awareness slightly more positive than their German competitors (+19%). Presumably, this difference in awareness should have shown a higher openness for different cultural backgrounds and therefore their employment. Nonetheless, in our interviews none of these tendencies were confirmed, displaying the same behaviour across the countries. As already addressed in RQ3, the cultural awareness was neither in Swedish nor in German based companies regarded as insufficient or troublesome.

Continuing with the individual performance assessments, the results are almost entirely showing that the Swedish respondents are more positive when it comes to the assessment of multicultural teams and their performance (see appendix B: PF 15, 05, 37, 38) as well as their general perspective of the performance of heterogeneous over homogeneous teams (see appendix B: PF11). Notwithstanding, the more positive Swedish results are not explicit. The discrepancy between the Swedish and German results is negligible, not displaying any relevant systematic difference.

Therefore hypothesis 2 does not find any confirmation, resulting rejected.

3.3 Additional insights

During the interviews two additional topics were touched. The questions evolved out of our unstructured interviews. During the first interview the skill shortage and refugee crisis were mentioned, and we encouraged the interviewee to expand on these topics. As we considered the data collected from the first interview relevant, we decided it was worth investigating those two additional topics. Hence, we started to add the two, in our opinion, secondary issues to our qualitative research. As the number of samples is limited, we do not consider the questions as fundamental part of our research; rather they broaden the research's insights by adding two additional perspectives.

3.3.1 Skill shortage in the ICT

Question 5:

How do employees representing the company face the labour shortage issue?

With the fifth question the research turned on the issue of ICT skill shortage. In order to answer the question only the interviews were used. As aforementioned, the shortage of skilled labour in the ICT field is validated by the research conducted by the European Commission (2011). The insights of the interviews confirmed the lack of skilled labour, even though their interpretations of the skill shortage are many. An interviewee, whose company outsourced considerable parts of the ICT workload to subcontractors, sees the skill shortage as a rather unobtrusive problem that can be largely ignored especially because they outsourced the root of the problem (Interview 4). Another participant explained that a large share of the ICT service and maintenance was outsourced to other European countries. Therefore moving the problem to another country. Nonetheless, he found the term of skills shortage as misleading. In his experience, the current ICT market is struggling with an exaggerated requirement for young ICT workers in their late twenties. According to him, the sector is demanding from the younger generation to have the same expertise he has with more than 25 years of experience in the field. Presumably this demand makes many ICT person “*Jack of all trades, Master of none*”. This makes it difficult to find the right expertise needed. Accordingly, he concluded that a clear separation of the software and hardware sphere would help to find the skilled labour needed.

Many companies especially big companies have fulfilled this transition, while other SMEs are still postponing the step as they would have to employ two employee instead of one (Interview 2). For interviewees 3, 5, 6, and 7 the skill shortage is well observable in the technical field. The companies have problems to find the right candidate for the open vacancies. Number 5 is already searching for someone in the technical service department for two years without success; number 6 is in constant trouble finding enough technicians that are skilled enough to work in their repair-service and software-support. Interviewees 3 and 7 are hiring massively but they encounter some troubles when trying to combine multiculturalism and the right skills needed. Following interviewee 2, interviewee 5 also questioned the reports about the skill shortage. In his opinion a great share of job applicants is bringing outdated knowledge in the field. Moreover, inappropriate attitudes make it difficult to bring the person in contact with customers. He explained that those insights raise the question if it is worth to invest in those candidates or not. Interview 1 also experiences the skill shortage, stating that the current situation makes them think about widening their potential field of applicants. A situation common also for interviewee 3 and 7, who lament shortage of experienced people. Both of them even considered opening the range of applicants abroad, but they consider this a risky investment. In general the insights from the interviews seem to suggest that all companies suffer from skill shortage, but no concrete action seems to be taken to effectively fill the open positions.

3.3.2 A chance to diminish the ICT skill shortage?

Question 6:

Do companies see a chance in employing refugees in the coming future?

Coming to the last question a rather diversified picture and response was given. While the quantitative research did not assess specific questions regarding the refugee crisis and its potentials for the ICT sector, the personal interviews draw a mainly positive perspective on the issue.

Interestingly, the literature insight, describing Germany as less tolerant towards employees than Sweden, this cannot be validated by the small amount of samples. Several German based interview partners named specific actions taken by their companies to allow refugees to enter

the ICT if the basic requirements are met. One respondent (Interview 2) gave the example from a refugee who is currently waiting for the final approval from the German state to be allowed to work. Given that the legal requirements are fulfilled, the company plans to give the person an internship in the ICT and if applicable the possibility to work in the field after. At this, *“he has to adapt to the culture but as it comes to the ICT it stays zeros and ones”*. For the respondent,

“ICT is like math, TCP/IP is TCP/IP, [...] for an ICT infrastructure there's a certain way to set it up with some differences down below [...] Domain Controllers are all the same, File Servers are all the same, the only difference is the language”.

(Interviewee 2)

For him this common ICT playing field, in which everything is very exact, makes it easy to regard refugees as future potential co-workers. What works in one language also works in the other, as already stated *“ICT is like math”* since a strong standardisation exists. For him people who are familiar with the ICT often display similar thinking. ICT therefore can become a bridge between cultures *“as (on a fictional party) you automatically hang with your other IT guys [...] you are somehow talking about bits and bytes”*.

In another company, where a great share of the work includes technical computer repairs, the CEO decided to increase the scope of potential hiring to those who, even if not speaking the national language, can have enough technical understanding to do the job. The management decision was also fruit of the current influx of refugees. Refugees who meet the requirements are regarded more than welcome to take the opportunity to work for the company. The agreement was welcomed by the 35 technical departments and widely regarded as a logical step to follow since the mother company already shows a lot of efforts to help the refugees (Interview 6).

Another respondent described his company open to employ technicians who are not speaking the national language, refugees included. Anew, the ICT's strong usage of the English language, from technical documentations to best practices to troubleshooting, according to him allows being more flexible in whom to hire, even when the local language is missing. Nonetheless, in his company these employments are still limited to the in-house tech department. Beyond that, the company is held back by their current customer base that wants to have a contact speaking the local language (Interview 5).

Language barriers are in general pointed out as the decisive factor to not employ people with a different cultural background, given that the task involves strong customer involvement (Interviews 1 - 6). Interviewee 3 claims that the language is still needed since it is company language, while interviewee 7 would hire anybody who speaks English. Leaving the customer contact aside, the openness seems to be unscathed as all participants showed concrete endeavour (Interviews 2, 5, 6) or at least openness (Interviews 1, 3, 4, 7) towards multicultural teams considering refugees as potential employees.

It attracted our attention that cultural differences were less seen as a possible factor of trouble but mainly as a valuable, different perspective that can be helpful to the “native” team members. The insights collected deliver a positive picture on cultural diversity. More critical perspectives on cultural differences were regarded as temporary phenomena that can be solved by appropriate guidance from the management or through real-life experience in the field. As one interviewee stated:

“Individuals fear what they don't know... hence, it is even more important to have multicultural teams and not just to focus on one nationality. Otherwise, the fear level would stay the same. The confrontation with fear helps”.

(Interviewee 6)

Breaking the insights down on the specific perspective on refugees, the respondents were rather positive about the motivation refugees bring with them. Those who adapt to the new environment are reckoned to have a considerable level of motivation (Interviews 1 & 5), as an interviewee stated: *“Necessity is the mother of invention... and engagement”* (Interview 1).

4 Conclusions

The results collected in this paper analysed two different countries, notably the difference between such countries is negligible. The results are generalisable only to a certain extent because the present research has not covered the totality of the ICT companies in the two countries, making further research necessary. However, given the homogeneity of the results, we consider the results as a valid representation. Expanding the findings and applying those to other countries might be possible if the country analysed shares the same underlying conditions of the two considered in this paper. Nonetheless, more research is needed to confirm this or if those findings are applicable also to ICT companies in countries not sharing the mentioned factors.

In regards of hypothesis one, this research claims that multiculturalism happens as a by-product of the hiring process and it is not a pursued goal. Our research has shown that the vast majority of companies participating display a strong openness towards multicultural teams. Despite finding a generally high awareness of the benefits involved in having multicultural teams (cultural awareness), this research did not find any evidence of a trend involving trading part of the skills in favour of a diverse culture. Moreover, language barriers are perceived as a potential hurdle that could prevent companies to pursue the creation of multicultural teams.

When asked about the specific assessment of the performance of multicultural teams in research question 1 a strongly positive perspective was taken. The respondents assessed cultural diversity as an important, and highly positive, factor influencing the performance, whether on outputs produced, team influence or future perspective.

Regarding research question 2 it became clear that culture does always play a subordinate role during the hiring, team creation, and team building process. However, the research does not allow us to draw detailed conclusions on the relative importance compared to skills and knowledge. Further research is needed to address this limitation.

Nonetheless, even with the companies' high cultural awareness the actual level of implementation is below the potential, as evaluated in research question 3, relegating the role of multiculturalism to a desirable outcome, yet not actively pursued. Hence, we consider the companies as rather backward orientated on implementing multiculturalism. A statement

backed up by the results of the self-assessment test analysed in chapter 3.4 to answer research question 4.

Regarding the labour shortage and the large number of refugees in the two analysed countries, the respondent displayed an interest toward integration but seldom coupled with implementation. In these regards there was a general feeling of risks involved in the hiring of those persons, mainly ascribable to the high linguistic barrier and the lack of transparency in education. Nonetheless, the results showed that the labour shortage is almost oppressing some companies, which struggle in finding the right candidate for long periods of time. Questions over the existence of the “right” candidate are left unanswered since there is indication that companies are overdemanding in terms of qualifications.

Concluding, it appears the times are ripe to connect the dots and start drawing from this “diverse” pool of labour, even if it means sacrificing the company language. Consequently, the companies in Sweden and Germany can prove that their openness towards diverse times is not only to show political fairness but real commitment.

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6 Appendices

Appendix A: Interviews Highlights

Interview 1

- Working with different cultural background demands certain level of experience - lacking experience leads to problems
- Different business customs have to be overcome, this process takes time, certain people need a guidance or framework to know how business is conducted
- Previous experience with what happens when cultural awareness does not exist, the company ran from the very beginning in Germany into a deadlock, the higher management CEO and CFO had a different cultural background which lead to conflicts
- Different understanding of leadership and a lack of cultural insight lead to misunderstanding (leadership role was not accepted)
- Hiring -> look for people who fit the German market
- For customer contact language is highly important, in the technical field it is not
- Most important attributes for hiring
 - Initiative, Self-motivation, creative thinking, consecutive action
- Cultural wise, technical field demands more “Egocentric” personalities while in customer relations a “Family oriented” personality is preferred
- Cultural boundaries are not very clear. The assimilation and integration process makes it easier to work together without being aware of specific differences
- Skill Shortage -> very difficult and it takes a lot of time
- Strong potential, people who had nothing usually bring motivation to work: super diligent and enormously motivated
- Culture makes differences, some are super networked and get more information from the customer than others
- In order to hire the only thing that you need is experience. You can not train for multicultural teams, you have to acclimate to the rules of the game. And for sure sometimes people are instrumentalized to certain extent because you can use their background for the company’s interest
- Difficult to see where refugees will add something to the current skills shortage
- In the technical field culture does not make a difference, in other fields yes

Interview 2

- ICT team super international
- Struggle to exist not because of culture but because of the distribution of power (admin rights). Power struggle is created out the distribution of power, it is not about culture
- In ICT English is the corporate language
- Supporting documentation is done in four languages. Troubleshooting, servers, file etc. all run in english
- Video conferences all are English
- For us there's no skill shortage, might be linked to the great share of employees who are outsourced
- ICT is very exact, what works in one language as well works in the other language, it is like math, a strong standardisation, everyone is socialised with a certain kind of ICT thinking
- Culture might give in different understandings when it comes to data protection, but here one has to move because national regulations dictate what has to be followed (no room to maneuver)
- Refugees. Culture will not make a difference, a person will be able to use whatever he wants to do (standardisation), it is all the same.
- If a certain employee has to do a six week IT practical work, he has to adapt to the culture but as it comes to the ICT it stays to zeros and ones.
- Your job profession is a bridge to your personal life. An interest in the ICT field connects automatically
- In recruitment Culture, color, language makes no difference. Knowledge makes the difference, can the person do the job or not?
- Second criteria, can I send him to the customer or not
- People looks for with 20 years experience but who is no older than 30 years
- The ICT world, to ease the recruitment, split the expertise in two: software and hardware. Having both merged is too much. IBM and HP splitted it a long time ago.
- Problem is you have to hire two people, because it expanded to much, and soon you have another split, with HTML Java based stuff and who don't want to use UNIX. Everyone is a "Jack of all trades, Master of none". Everything has to be certified etc.
- There has never been an issue. I don't remember that my colleagues ever had a problem to work with other cultures.

Interview 3

- Employing 20 people a year, strong expansion
- Focus on the person skill and knowledge rather than trying to fill a position
- Out of 80 employees 5-7 have different culture, but they are Swedish born
- They talk a lot about cultural awareness, because there is labour shortage, but they don't have a strategy and they need one before employing non-local speaker person to avoid low integration
- High risk/cost in trying to hire people not living in Sweden, and they don't know their university (if good or bad)
- Company language is local, not English
- They value a lot personality and they try to have very broad and different knowledges
- At the moment it's hard to switch to English, because they all speak Swedish, but for the long term it would be a very good idea (since they also got acquired by a big international corporation)
- Now 50% of the project are in English but they still speak Swedish
- Believe that people are not willing to change, generally, and language as well. There will be some resistance
- The concept of discrimination is big, and source of worries.
- They believe that hiring people with different cultures would be great, but they know it will time to make things work
- Sometimes having a great employee (skill wise) but with low communication skills endangers everything, because they cannot collaborate.

Interview 4

- Overall no positive or negative experiences with cultural backgrounds
- However, everyone can learn from another culture as they approach certain situation differently
- Management does not actively push for multicultural teams
- Team is used to work in multicultural teams
- No avoidance to work with different cultures
- Corporate language is German, slides in English and sometimes Spanish. In international communication it is English
- For Telefonica the core business is right now more networks and marketing, less ICT
- Lot of the ICT is outsourced in the recent years
- In the project's team-formation culture does not play a role, as long as you don't have to bring something to Spain. Then you spice up your team to have a better chance of getting the project
- Recruitment, no special focus exists. However, for different products which are targeted for a certain culture it plays a role
- Recruitment focuses on skill level
- No specific idea about including refugees in the future, it is seen as a potential market.
- Different branches have different cultures, more with the fact that they were two different companies beforehand. And both companies experienced a certain kind of group forming process. Now it is more about who can get or gain a certain kind of power. And if someone from one company becomes director he or she is trying to get colleagues from his former company into the boat. But this is a general pattern which has nothing to do with culture but rather is a human behaviour. You trust more the coworkers you know
- A clear goal exists: culture becomes subordinate to the other goals
- Recruitment. Corporate language should be English, but in reality is German and the whole recruitment side is in Germany. If someone is completely external and has no German language skill it is very difficult.
- For higher positions, recruitment is already more flexible. IT security boss if from an Israeli company
- Team training. No real structure in team building efforts. Very unlikely that colleagues undergo training workshops. There's not much money invested into extra measures. And when they have those workshops they are very careful in the investment.

Interview 5

- Hiring -> cultural background is totally not relevant in the hiring process
- Different languages give new opportunities for customers to feel at home (service & retail)
- Different culture-different mentality, this can have a positive influence on the co-workers: a certain kind of loose conduct eases the atmosphere but can as well slow down the working process in the tech department
- From a human and personal perspective, it is very important to have a mixed group with different cultural backgrounds. If the mix is right, you can create a certain kind of balance in the team that brings the whole team forward in example extroverted vs introverted team members
- Cultural awareness -> everyone has to arrange to work with different cultures. Regarding classical team development, I as a boss have to see where I can use a certain kind of attitude, where is it helpful and where it is not.
- In the technical field, I had better experiences in having someone who is working for himself; if you want to have a person who can solve real live problems you rather look for someone who is not German and a certain kind of flexibility in his/her problem solving approach.
- Refugees -> for the company right now, it is very difficult, in general there are two opposing sides, one insight is that there are people you probably don't want to employ, on the other side they have a by far high self-motivation if they are supported rightly, there is a huge potential to find skill shortage in the future
- Skill shortage -> yes, is very prominent. However, it is not a shortage but rather a shortage of people with a decent willingness to work. The company searches already for more than two years for a skilled technician. Connecting it with the refugees, if it gives refugees the chance to work in tech field, educate them in the field without putting the pressure on the state too high, a lot is possible.

Interview 6

- Over the last 17 years in ICT, environment becomes more and more multicultural, you can not only profit on the ICT field from it but learn more in general about other cultures perspectives
- The level of experience (work with multicultural team) can help, however a new employee of mine worked before for Intel and still his level of hostility and fear towards foreigners is new
- Individuals fear what they don't know. Hence, it is even more important to have multicultural teams and not just to focus on one nationality otherwise, the fear level would stay the same. Confrontation with the fear helps
- You have to work in multicultural teams, there is no way around it. I love to get to know stories from their environment. I think it is super exciting and interesting
- Language plays a role, especially in the retail sector: I had to refuse an applicant who worked abroad for Apple, spoke four languages but he has to speak German as well. There is a certain language barrier
- I am not allowed to privilege someone or not, but if I have the option between two very good applicants, I go for the one with the multicultural background
- Multiculturalism can be a competitive advantage
- The company decided to employ a person with sufficient English skills and no German in the technical field
- Because of skill shortage technicians are under the subtext of the refugee crisis. We decided to employ someone who has a technical understanding and sufficient English skills for the job. Especially for Apple, all the different IT knowledge basis tools are all in English, it is already an advantage if he or she has a better understanding of English than German. There is an active decision from the CEO that we need to widen our field of recruitment, which was positively perceived by the store managers. All 35 technical department are positive with the idea
- Market is completely empty you can not get enough, so if refugees have the knowledge, and they want to work, then we should use it. Sometimes they might lack the language skills but it is not very relevant
- The ICT field is the perfect field for multicultural teams as it uses English, it is used in many companies and is very important. The ICT is in English, programming language are based on English. It is the perfect language where you will find the most English speaking teams
- In our company if you leave the sales and telco part, employees as sometimes don't speak German and it works
- A person with a certain kind of pride (through culture) can have a positive influence on the co-workers working attitude.
- Team-provision arguably can as well be used to bring together a team even better
- General team building measurements: team eating, getting rid of the work itself and focus on more private topics. Made a good experience with it. Never really had problems to build team.
- Multicultural awareness does exist, but I don't explicitly focus on how we can become more multicultural. You have regulations in place and you base your decision on who to employ neutrally
- I know already all the Germans. Other cultures are by far more exciting, ...they bring me forward, because I can get more language coverage.

- Cultural Awareness is not a big topic, there are more important issues which have priority. The company does not have the capacity to start thinking about diversity in more detail
- Fascination technology in good. Passion towards the same topic helps

Interview 7

- Last year 7 person, this year 5 (actual size is 25). planning on getting to 40
- Labour shortage only affecting the seniors, there is high supply of students being X a university city
- Ever considered going "global"? not really, they get some applications from people outside Sweden but they are usually people without the skills needed
- Language is mostly Swedish. Not strictly. but they have mostly English speaking clients
- Displayed high awareness coming from literature first and later experience
- They really believe that different cultures and diversity changes the working environment for the better, making it more creative and stimulating
- Additionally having different cultures helps if you want to enter a certain market
- They have problems in finding people with the right skills with a different cultural background, in that part of Sweden
- They had a couple of chances of having diverse cultures in the company, but they failed due to the other part or because the it was required to the person to relocated from a far place, or with incomplete or not transparent recent working experience
- They still consider hard to attract people from different nationalities, since the graduates from that university are mainly Swedes
- Thought about hiring refugees. But it still proves some problems in assessing their background (university wise and experience wise)
- Generally it's seen as a risk or a high investment

Appendix B: Survey Pages and Results

Page 01

Hello,

We are Christopher Sauer and Egon Visintainer, two students at Lund University in the master in management program. The following short questionnaire seeks to learn more about the role of multicultural teams in tech, IT and relative consulting companies.

The survey is part of our thesis project where we explore how the efforts towards more diversity might influence the performance of teams or of the company. The final paper seeks to deliver tech-companies a way to assess their level of cultural awareness and the degree of implementing well performing multicultural teams. The questions asked are related to:

- a. Company setting**
- b. Team performance**
- c. Your experiences**

The questionnaire is anonymous. And we assure complete confidentiality. However, if you are willing to have an in depth-interview with us, contact information can be provided at the end of the survey. Furthermore, even though we would like to encourage you to answer all questions, you can skip questions if needed.

Thank you very much!

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher Egon". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Figure 1: Page 1 of the Survey

1. In which of the following areas are you active (or play a role) in?

Hiring

Team Composition

Team Development/Building

Other ...

2. In which area(s) is your company mainly operating in?

Software Engineering

Hardware Engineering

IT-Services

IT-Consulting

Other ...

3. Country

Where is your company based?

Sweden

Germany

Other ...

Figure 2: Page 2 of the Survey

Appendix Table 1: PF20 Results – QNr 1

PF20		Hiring	Team Composition	Team Development Building	Other	Total
In which of the following areas are you active (or play a role)? (Multiple answers possible)		22	23	23	16	45
	In total %	49%	51%	51%	36%	100%

Appendix Table 2: PF21 Results – QNr 2

PF21		Software Engineering	Hardware Engineering	IT-Services	IT-Consulting	Others ...	Total
In which area(s) is your company mainly operating in? (Multiple answers possible)		22	10	11	11	15	49
	In total %	45%	20%	22%	22%	31%	100%

Among others: Game Development, Applied Science, ...

Appendix Table 3: PF35 Results – QNr 3

PF35		Sweden	Germany	Total
Where is your company based?		22	25	47
	In total %	47%	53%	100%

Definition

The following questions are about cultural diversity. Cultural diversity is defined as:

"The dissimilarity among company members in terms of ethnicity, race (as used by academic literature), culture, beliefs and norms".

4. Assessment

Would you consider your company to be multiculturally diverse?

Yes

No

5. Assessment

Roughly, how many teams in your company are multicultural (people with different cultural backgrounds working together)?

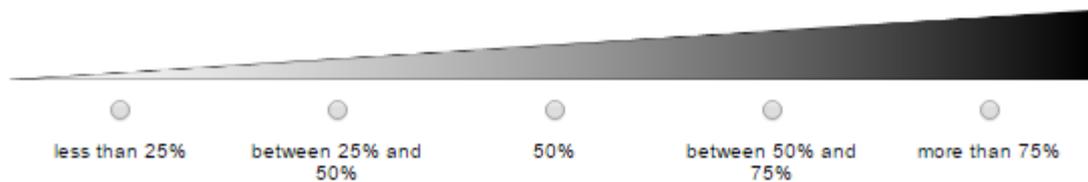


Figure 3: Pages 3 and 4 of the Survey

Appendix Table 4: PF02 Results – QNr 4

PF02							
		No		Yes	Total		
		6		39	45		
In total %		13%		87%	100%		
Would you consider your company to be multiculturally diverse?							
Sweden		5		15	20		
		25%		75%	100%		
Germany		1		24	25		
		4%		96%	100%		

Appendix Table 5: PF27 Results – QNr 5

PF27											
		< 25%	25% -50%	50%	50% - 75%	> 75%	Total				
		12	11	6	6	10	45				
In total %		27%	24%	13%	13%	22%	100%				
		51%		36%							
Roughly, how many teams in your company are multicultural (people with different cultural backgrounds working together)?											
Sweden		5	4	2	4	5	20				
		25%	20%	10%	20%	25%	100%				
		45%		45%							
Germany		7	7	4	2	5	25				
		28%	28%	16%	8%	20%	100%				
		56%		28%							

6. Performance and Effectiveness in Teams

Richard A. Guzzo and Marcus W. Dickson (1996) defined some dimensions that can influence the performance of teams.

How would you assess the importance of the following dimensions on team performance and effectiveness?

	no importance	minor importance	neutral	important	very important
Cohesiveness	<input type="radio"/>				
Group Composition	<input type="radio"/>				
Leadership	<input type="radio"/>				
Motivation	<input type="radio"/>				
Goals	<input type="radio"/>				
Communication	<input type="radio"/>				
Feedback	<input type="radio"/>				
Other ...	<input type="radio"/>				

7. Performance

How are the effects of cultural differences on teams?

Mostly positive

Mostly negative

No effects

Figure 4: Pages 5 and 6 of the Survey

Appendix Table 6: PF30 Results – QNr 6

PF30		no importance	minor importance	neutral	important	very important	Total
Richard A. Guzzo and Marcus W. Dickson (1996) defined some dimensions that can influence the performance of teams. How would you assess the importance of the following dimensions on team performance and effectiveness?	Cohesiveness	0 0%	2 5%	10 24%	23 55%	7 17%	42 100%
	Group Comp.	0 0%	3 7%	5 12%	23 55%	11 26%	42 100%
	Leadership	0 0%	0 0%	3 8%	22 55%	15 38%	40 100%
	Motivation	0 0%	0 0%	1 2%	11 26%	30 71%	42 100%
	Goals	0 0%	1 2%	6 14%	19 45%	16 38%	42 100%
	Communic.	1 2%	0 0%	0 0%	14 33%	27 64%	42 100%
	Feedback	1 2%	0 0%	2 5%	22 52%	17 40%	42 100%
	Other ...	1 2%	3 7%	34 81%	1 2%	3 7%	42 100%

Appendix Table 7: PF15 Results – QNr 7

PF15		Negative	No effects	Positive	Total
How are the effects of cultural differences on teams?	In total %	0 0%	6 14%	36 86%	42 100%
	Sweden	0 0%	2 11%	17 89%	19 100%
	Germany	0 0%	4 17%	19 83%	23 100%

Performance

The following questions try to gain a more detailed understanding on the performance of multicultural teams on different dimensions.

How would you assess the role of multicultural diversity on team performance in regards of :

8. Group-produced outputs

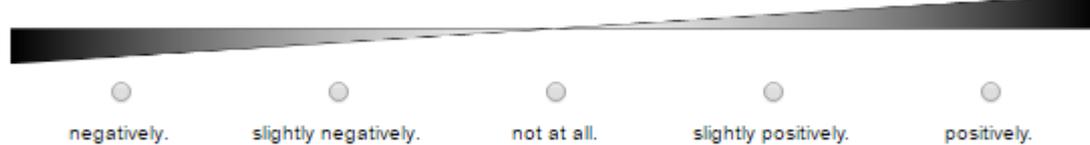
(quantity or quality, customer satisfaction, speed, etc.)



9. Influences on group members

(Please complete the sentence)

Diverse teams influence the performance of individual team members ...



10. Team capability to perform better in the future

(Please complete the sentence)

In the long run, the diverse teams' capability to perform better ...

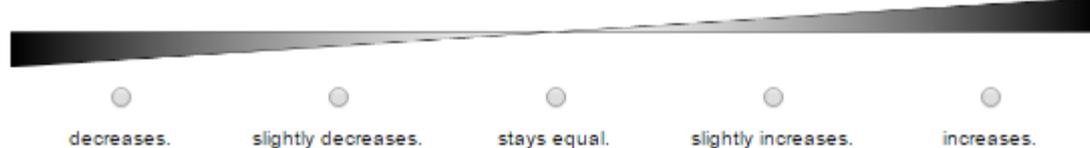


Figure 5: Page 7 of the Survey

Appendix Table 8: PF05 Results – QNr 8

PF05		Negative --	Negative -	Neutral	Positive +	Positive ++	Total
		0	3	11	16	11	41
In total %		0%	7%	27%	39%	27%	100%
			7%		66%		
Group-produced outputs (quantity or quality, customer sat., speed, etc.) Diversity influence on produced outputs	Sweden	0	1	4	7	7	19
		0%	5%	21%	37%	37%	100%
			5%		74%		
	Germany	0	2	7	9	4	22
	0%	9%	32%	41%	18%	100%	
		9%		59%			

Appendix Table 9: PF37 Results – QNr 9

PF37		Negative --	Negative -	Neutral	Positive +	Positive ++	Total
		0	2	8	19	12	41
In total %		0%	5%	20%	46%	29%	100%
			5%		76%		
Influences on group members Diversity influence on group members	Sweden	0	2	3	8	6	19
		0%	11%	16%	42%	32%	100%
			11%		74%		
	Germany	0	0	5	11	6	22
	0%	0%	23%	50%	27%	100%	
		0%		77%			

Appendix Table 10: PF38 Results – QNr 10

PF38		Negative --	Negative -	Neutral	Positive +	Positive ++	Total
		0	1	9	15	16	41
In total %		0%	2%	22%	37%	39%	100%
			2%		76%		
Team capability to perform better in the future - Capability to perform better in the future	Sweden	0	1	2	7	9	19
		0%	5%	11%	37%	47%	100%
			5%		84%		
	Germany	0	0	7	8	7	22
	0%	0%	32%	36%	32%	100%	
		0%		68%			

11. Performance

According to your knowledge, which teams perform better?

- Same cultural background performs better
- Diverse cultural backgrounds perform better
- They perform the same

Figure 6: Page 8 of the Survey

Appendix Table 11: PF11 Results – QNr 11

PF11		Homogeneous	Neutral	Heterogeneous	Total
		3	13	25	41
In total %		7%	32%	61%	100%
According to your knowledge, which teams perform better?	Sweden	2	4	13	19
		11%	21%	68%	100%
	Germany	1	9	12	22
		5%	41%	55%	100%

Hiring, Composition & Development

How would you assess the company's orientation in regards of:
(Multiple answers possible)

12. Hiring

In the hiring process ...

- ... my company focus on knowledge and skills
- ... my company also considers cultural backgrounds
- ... my company considers other factors such as ...

13. Team Composition

When creating a new team ...

- ... my company focuses on knowledge and skills
- ... my company also considers cultural backgrounds
- ... my company considers other factors such as ...

14. Team Development

For team development ...

- ... my company considers also the cultural background
- ... my company focuses on knowledge and skills
- ... my company considers other factors such as ...

Figure 7: Page 9 of the Survey

Appendix Table 12: PF06 Results – QNr 12

PF06		Knowledge & Skills	Culture	Other	Total
How would you assess the company's orientation in regards of: Hiring		40	11	15	41
	In total %	98%	27%	37%	100%
	Sweden	19	8	9	19
		100%	42%	47%	100%
	Germany	21	3	6	22
		95%	14%	27%	100%

Appendix Table 13: PF07 Results – QNr 13

PF07		Knowledge & Skills	Culture	Other	Total
How would you assess the company's orientation in regards of: Team Composition		40	12	3	41
	In total %	98%	29%	7%	100%
	Sweden	19	5	2	19
		100%	26%	11%	100%
	Germany	21	7	1	22
		95%	32%	5%	100%

Appendix Table 14: PF08 Results – QNr 14

PF08		Knowledge & Skills	Culture	Other	Total
How would you assess the company's orientation in regards of: Team Development		36	10	3	41
	In total %	88%	24%	7%	100%
	Sweden	17	7	2	19
		89%	37%	11%	100%
	Germany	19	3	1	22
		86%	14%	5%	100%

15. Promotion

If your company considers the cultural background, does it try to promote teams with similar or diverse cultural background?

- We strive to create teams where members have similar cultural backgrounds
 - We strive to create teams where members have different cultural backgrounds from one another
-
- Cultural backgrounds are not put into consideration
-

16. Own Experience

Some studies show that a well managed multicultural team performs better than a well managed team with the same cultural background (homogeneous). Based on your experience and knowledge, do you agree or not?

- I agree, multicultural teams outperform homogeneous teams.
- I disagree, multicultural teams do not perform better than homogeneous teams.

17. Own Experience

Some studies show that poorly managed multicultural teams underperform compared with homogeneous teams. Did your company encounter similar experiences

- Yes, it's very common
 - Yes, but it's very uncommon
 - No, they perform the same
-
- I am not able to answer the question

Figure 8: Pages 10 and 11 of the Survey

Appendix Table 15: PF09 Results – QNr 15

PF09		Homogeneous	Neutral	Heterogeneous	Total
		1	31	9	41
In total %		2%	76%	22%	100%
If your company considers the cultural background, does it try to promote teams with similar or diverse cultural background?	Sweden	0	12	7	19
		0%	63%	37%	100%
Germany		1	19	2	22
		5%	86%	9%	100%

Appendix Table 16: PF13 Results – QNr 16

PF13		Negative		Positive	Total
		11		29	40
In total %		28%		73%	100%
Some studies show that a well managed multicultural team performs better than a well managed team with the same cultural background (homogeneous). Based on your experience and knowledge, do you agree or not?	Sweden	4		15	19
		21%		79%	100%
Germany		7		14	21
		33%		67%	100%

Appendix Table 17: PF14 Results – QNr 17

PF14		Yes, it's very common	Yes, but it's very uncommon	No, they perform the same	I am not able to answer the question	Total
		6	8	7	20	41
In total %		15%	20%	17%	49%	100%
Some studies show that poorly managed multicultural teams underperform compared with homogeneous teams. Did your company encounter similar experiences?						

18. Company knowledge

Do you consider your company's knowledge about how to handle multicultural teams as sufficient?

- Yes, we have tools and courses to improve the management of multicultural teams and diversity in general.
- No, everyone is on his or her own when it comes to multicultural teams and diversity.

19. Cultural awareness

How would you assess the level of "cultural awareness" in your company?



20. Cultural awareness

Do you think that the level of cultural awareness allows the company to create cultural synergies?

(Cultural synergies can be created when employees accept and appreciate existing cultural differences and use them to produce creative and effective solutions)

- Yes
- No

Figure 9: Page 12 of the Survey

Appendix Table 18: PF16 Results – QNr 18

PF16		Negative		Positive	Total
		27		13	40
In total %		68%		33%	100%
Do you consider your company's knowledge about how to handle multicultural teams as sufficient?					
Sweden		13		6	19
		68%		32%	100%
Germany		14		7	21
		67%		33%	100%

Appendix Table 19: PF32 Results – QNr 19

PF32		Insufficient	Low	No idea	Acceptable	Exceptional	Total
		0	5	1	27	7	39
In total %		0%	13%	3%	69%	18%	103%
How would you assess the level of "cultural awareness" in your company? Level of cultural awareness							
Sweden		1	0	15	3	19	
		0%	5%	0%	79%	16%	100%
Germany		5	4	1	12	4	21
		0%	19%	5%	57%	19%	100%
		19%			76%		

Appendix Table 20: PF33 Results – QNr 20

PF33		Negative		Positive	Total
		11		28	39
In total %		28%		72%	100%
Do you think that the level of cultural awareness allows the company to create cultural synergies? (Cultural synergies can be created when employees accept and appreciate existing cultural differences and use them to produce creative and effective solutions) Cultural awareness used					
Sweden		5		13	18
		28%		72%	100%
Germany		6		15	21
		29%		71%	100%

21. Assessment

Overall, are you satisfied with the company's efforts when it comes to diversity management?

Yes, we are vanguard in managing multicultural teams.

Partly, we are on the right track but we still have a long way to go.

No, we have not started implementing diversity management measures because ...

Figure 10: Page 13 of the Survey

Appendix Table 21: PF18 Results – QNr 21

PF18		Negative	Neutral	Positive	Total
Overall, are you satisfied with the company's efforts when it comes to diversity management?	In total %	4 10%	24 60%	12 30%	40 100%
	Sweden	3	12	4	19
	Germany	1 16%	12 63%	8 21%	21 100%
		5%	57%	38%	100%

22. Lastly,

Please position the marker in the quadrant that best represents the situation in your company. Click on the mouse in the area that suits you best. You can change the position by holding left click and moving the cursor. Awareness is the degree of knowledge and awareness regarding multicultural diversity; Implementation is about how much your company actually implement this knowledge by having multicultural teams.

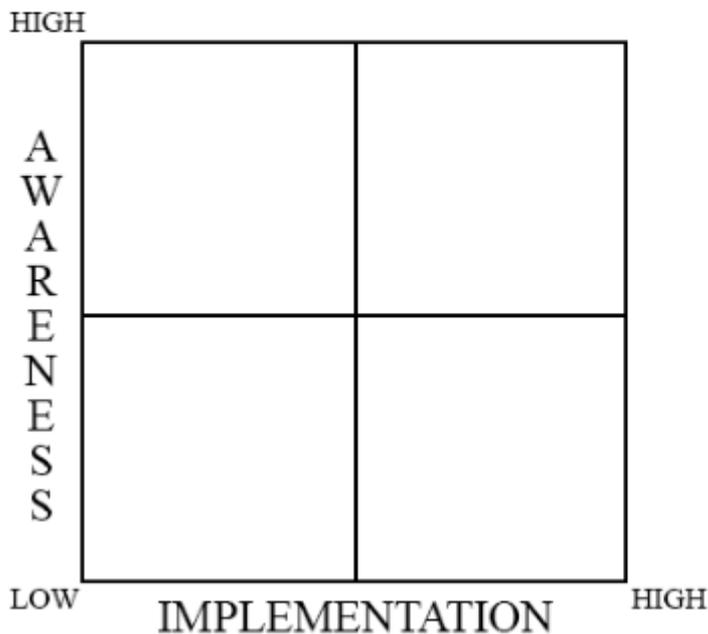
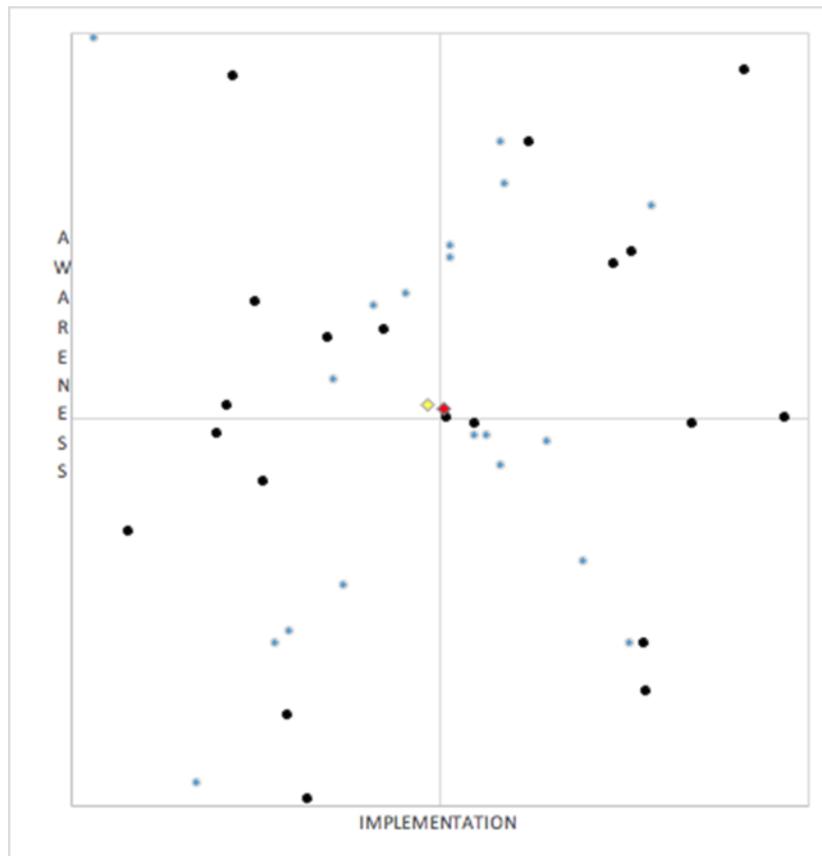


Figure 11: Page 14 of the Survey



23. Details

In order to regroup surveys from the same company, please state your company name and size (approximate number of employees):

Company name:

Number of employees:

24. Last question!

Before we come to the end, we kindly ask you to tick the boxes and leave your contact details. The questionnaire's inputs (including company name and size) are not connected to your email address.

- I am open for an in-dept interview to give in more information regarding multicultural teams
- I would be interested to receive an executive summary of the survey per mail

Figure 12: Page 15 of the Survey