



Chapter 1 Additional Resources

What is Culture?

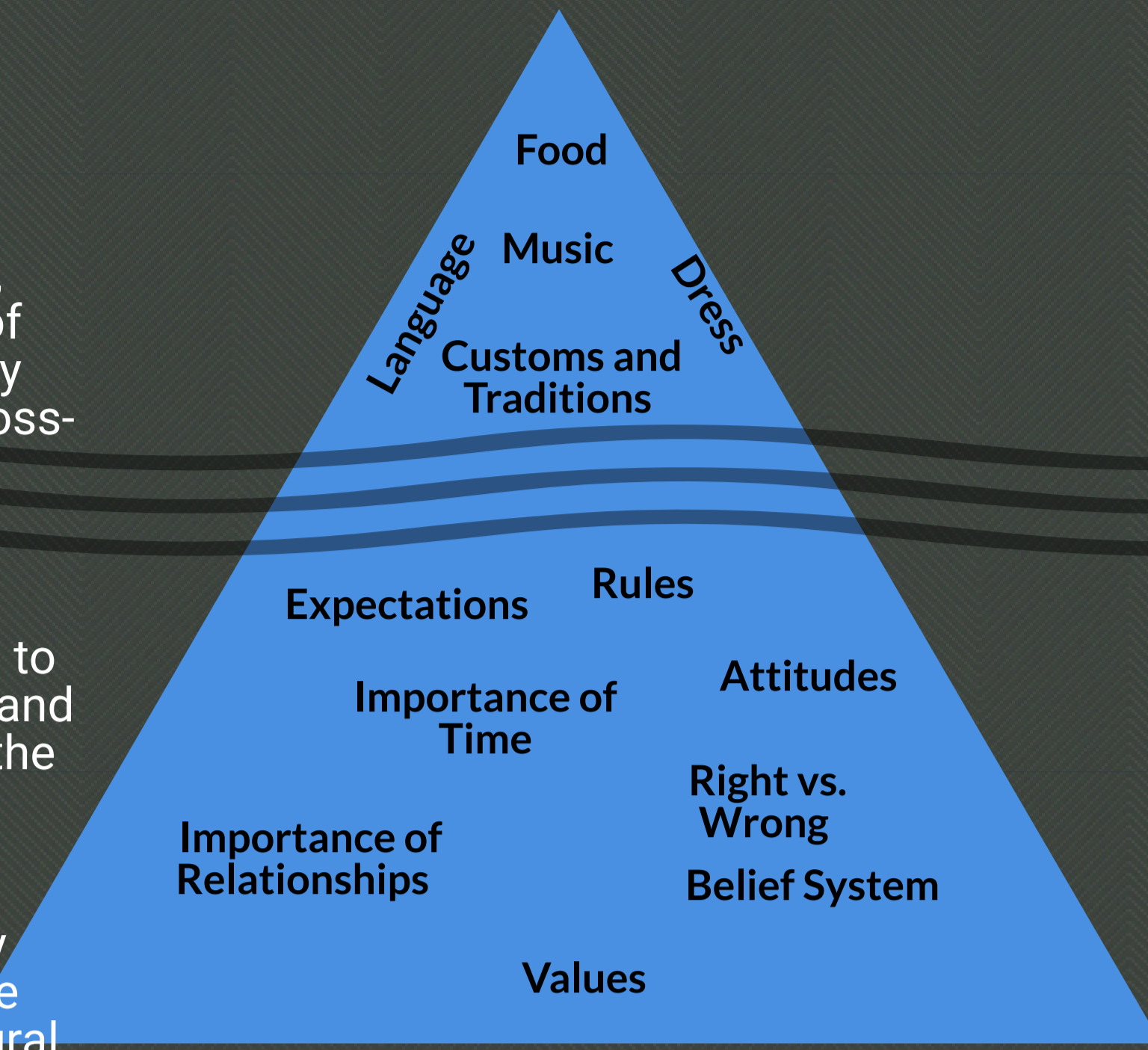
Did you know that we can only see around 10 % of an iceberg, i.e. the part that sits above the water? The rest remains hidden.

The same is true of culture - we only see a fraction.

The things we can see, taste, touch and hear of culture account for very little in terms of the cross-cultural challenges we may encounter.

Most challenges relate to our beliefs and values and they are hidden under the surface.

Although we can't see them, these are usually the things that drive the differences in our cultural encounters.



Why is this model so important?

It's important because it illustrates that we can't understand a culture simply by looking at it.

Instead culture is far more complex and we need to dig beneath the surface to fully understand what's going on.

Making quick decisions based on what we can see alone can be extremely misleading and is unlikely to help us create a situation in which we understand the motivations and drivers of the person we are interacting with.

By understanding the values, we are far more equipped to anticipate the behaviours.

The Price of Ignoring Culture

Did you know that McDonald's once caused outrage in China with a TV advert showing a Chinese man begging?

It was seen as insulting because begging is considered very shameful in Chinese culture.

Lots of companies have similar stories to tell in terms of learning cultural awareness the hard way.

This is why it's so important when working in different cultures or with people from other cultures, not to make assumptions and believe that everyone sees the world in the same way as us.

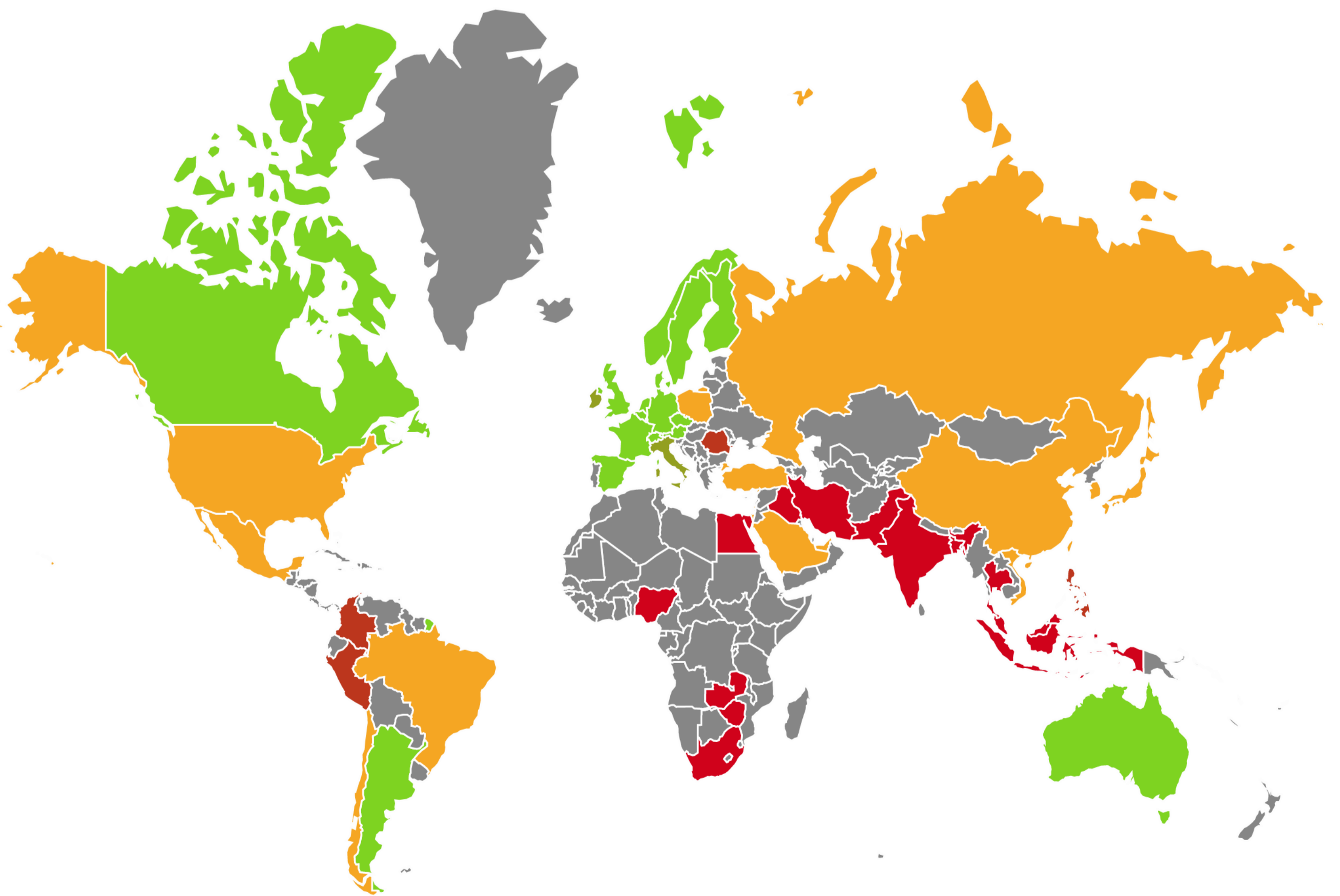
The results can sometimes be very expensive!



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