Chapter 9
Embedded in a Culture

Kornélia Lazányi
Obuda University, Hungary

Péter Holicza
Obuda University, Hungary

ABSTRACT

In the international literature, national cultures are still an evergreen topic. Even though - contrarily to previous decades' civilizational focus - the attention has shifted to leveraging benefits of multicultural environments and experiences. According to Huntington, nations belonging to different civilizations will never be able to work together smoothly, owing to the principal differences in their values, beliefs and behavior stemming from them. There are theorists, however, who think the differences can never be too big if there is willingness and positive experience with the other culture. Different dimensions character- ize national cultures. While some state to identify radical differences between two countries, others do not identify such. This chapter, after offering an insight into the basic approaches of national cultures, endeavors to analyze two discrete cultures (Russian, Hungarian) and presents the similarities and dif- ferences of them, along with tools and methods that are able to support the collaboration of people and organizations belonging to them.

INTRODUCTION

Culture is the invisible bond which ties people together. Culture is a scheme of knowledge shared by a relatively large number of people. Hence, it is a collection of explicit as well as implicit patterns of behaviour. It makes the members of the culture feel, think act and react in a certain, predefined way, hence makes their actions predictable. The importance of culture lies in its close association with the ways of thinking and living. Culture is related to the development of people's attitude. Cultural values serve as the founding principles of everyday life. They shape our thinking, behaviour and personality.

Several theories have been formulated to explain what culture is (Holicza, 2016b). According to the interpretation by Kim Ann Zimmermann, "Culture is the characteristics of a particular group of people, defined by everything from language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts". Today, in the United

States as in other countries populated largely by immigrants, the culture is influenced by the many groups of people that now make up the country" (Zimmermann, 2012). Others relate the culture with patterns: "Learned and shared human patterns or models for living; day- to-day living patterns. These patterns and models pervade all aspects of human social interaction" (Damen, 1987). John Useem defined it as learned and shared behaviour: "Culture has been defined in a number of ways, but most simply, as the learned and shared behaviour of a community of interacting human beings" (Useem, 1963).

Geert Hofstede, describes culture as the collective mental programming that separates members of one group or category of people from another (Hofstede, 2011). According to his understanding, culture can be defined as the "body of beliefs, norms, and values shared by a group of people, culture presents the biggest challenge to businesses working internationally", as stated by him "Culture is more often a source of conflict than of synergy".

Culture is important for a number of reasons because it influences an individual's life in a variety of ways, including values, views, desires, fears and worries. Belonging to a culture can provide individuals with an easy way to connect with others who share the same mindset and values (Chhokar, Brodbeck, House, Mahwah, 2007)

Culture as an institution has a unique role in the formation of modern states. Culture, forming the basis of modern nations, is dynamic, flexible and open to change structure. Culture appears as a semantic network that is woven over again with the change of generations (Malakhov, 2014)

Culture is an important point for international business. It is essential to know what culture is if you wish to operate successfully in an international business setting. It is very important to analyze cultural differences, because they may be the principal cause of failure in international business. It is important for people to realize that a basic understanding of cultural diversity is the key to effective cross-cultural communications (Dumetz, 2012; Kreitner, 2009). In order to understand in what way people from different cultures respond in different situations and why certain products do or do not flourish on a certain market, attention must be paid to cultural differences.

Present paper, besides providing a short overview of relevant literature strives to analyze the possibilities for creating a much more accepting culture on the basis of the example of Russia and Hungary.

ABOVE THE CULTURES: THE CIVILIZATIONS THEORY

The word civilization comes from the 'civilis' Latin adjective. It referred to a citizen. According to social, religious, legal, financial or political status, views or purposes these citizens gathering into groups (Latin Dictionary). Civilization is "The action or process of civilizing or of being civilized; a developed or ad- vanced state of human society." as the Oxford Dictionary explains (Oxford English Dictionary). Among political scientists, Samuel P. Huntington conducted one of the most comprehensive researches in this field. He defines civilization on the following way: „A civilization is thus the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of that which distinguishes humans from other species. It is defined both by common objective elements, such as language, history, religion, customs, institutions, and by the subjective self-identification of people." (The Post, 1990) Huntington makes difference between countries not in terms of their political and economic development, but the cultural and civilizational affiliation (Huntington, 1993). He defines the following world regions as Civilizations: Western (Christian), Orthodox (Christian), Islamic, Islamic/Hindu, Hindu,

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