Chapter 10
Different Cultures
Different People

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ABSTRACT

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 literature on cultures, especially that of national cultures has focused on cultural differences and on understanding and measuring them for long decades, but in the 21st century the attention has shifted to leveraging benefits of multicultural environments and experiences. Hence, present paper—after providing a short insight into the basic approaches of national cultures—endeavours to analyse Russian and Hungarian culture. We aim to present the similarities and differences of the two cultures, along with tools and methods that are able to lessen these differences and harvest the benefits of them.

INTRODUCTION

Culture is the invisible bond which ties people together. The importance of culture lies in its close association with the ways of thinking and living. Culture is related to the development of our attitude. Our cultural values serve as the founding principles of our life. They shape our thinking, behaviour and personality. 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)

Geert Hofstede, a Dutch sociologist who is internationally famous for his intercultural studies, describes culture as the collective mental programming that separates members of one group or category of people from another (Harrison, Yasin, 2015) 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 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 business partners respond and why certain products do or do not take off in a certain market, attention must be paid to cultural differences.

Present paper endeavors to provide a short overview about relevant literature and analyze the possibilities for creating a much more accepting culture on the basis of the example of Russia and Hungary. The paper also intends to point out potential means and methods and explains the role of the government within all these.

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 advanced 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. By these metrics he emphasized the following world regions: Western (Christian), Orthodox (Christian), Islamic, Islamic/Hindu, Hindu, African, Latin American, Sinic (Chinese), Buddhist and Japanese (Huntington, 1993). Focusing on the countries of this research, Hungary belongs to the Western Christian, Russia belongs to the Orthodox Christian civilization.

Based on the civilizations theory, Huntington published his famous concept of the future in the Foreign Affairs, titled “The Clash of Civilizations?”. His former student, Francis Fukuyama argued the thesis and presented a different view in The End of History and the Last Man (1992). In respond to that, Huntington expanded his article in the book: The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order (1996) (Holicza, 2016a). According to the Huntington’s theory, the coming period will be characterized by conflicts erupting as the world’s main civilizations reach their breaking points. The conflicts
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