

Theories of Culture

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Abstract

The article discusses the six basic theories of culture: Kluckhohn's theory of values, Hall's theory of intercultural communication, Hofstede's theory of cultures and organizations, Schwartz's theory of value orientations, Trompenaars and Turner's Model of National Culture Differences and House's GLOBAL (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness Research) theory. The basic aim is to describe the theories in order to elicit the parameters that most of them share. Every theory is then discussed from the viewpoint of its uniqueness and contribution to the global theory of culture. The shared cultural dimensions are then summarized with the ultimate goal to define the universal pivotal concepts that are central for the description of individual cultures as a basis for comparison of national cultures worldwide. Finally, an attempt is made to delineate those social spheres for which each of the existing cultural models is most suitable for further research.

Keywords

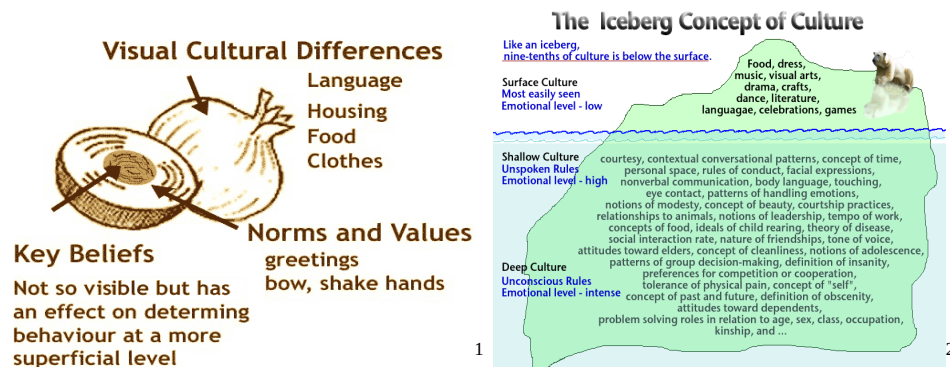
culture, cultural dimensions, national culture, cultural theories, values, value orientation

1. Introduction

Culture in general and national cultures in particular have been in the focus of interest for scholars in different scholarly areas for quite a long time. The beginnings of scholarly research could be traced back to the 20s of the 20th century with the works of E. Sapir (1921) and B. Whorf (1956) who were the first to seek how different languages reflect different mind-sets in different cultures. Since then the interest in the problems of how human behaviour, including language as verbal behaviour and body language, reflects the intrinsic beliefs and values characterizing different peoples, has been in the focus of interest of various scientific areas such as humanities, social studies and lately economics.

The period between the 50s and 90s encountered the emergence of several new theories of culture, often seemingly conflicting as their promoters approached the problem of culture from different perspectives, but commonly seeking for universal values whose combination could create a global framework through which national cultures can be described and compared. At present there are at least six major theories of culture which are simultaneously competing and overlapping creating a situation that has been described by Nardon and Steers as *culture theory jungle* (2009: 3). In a relatively chronological order they are Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), Hall (1976), Hofstede (1980/1997/2010), Schwartz (1992), Trompenaars (1997), House and GLOBE (2004).

What unites all theories is that they base their parameters on the presumption that national cultures contain both visible and invisible features. This division is reflected in the two most widespread visualized metaphors of culture, the one of the onion and the one of the iceberg. The idea is that the visual (or audial) cultural features are observable and present the surface layers of a national culture, while the invisible ones are hidden deeply in it. These deep beliefs and values are the ones that regulate the behaviour of the individuals within a society. There is a strong correlation between the two metaphors implying that the deep beliefs influence the shared values and predetermine the visual behaviour.



An interesting observation is that as seen from the illustration above both metaphors interpret language as part of the visual culture, while body language is placed in the shallow layers of culture and is more directly than language related to cultural norms and values. This raises a lot of questions concerning the intrinsic relation between language and culture. However, the issue is too complicated to be presented even in brief due to the limited space of the article. That is why it will be put aside for now despite the fact that language is a central parameter in one of the theories discussed here.

Discussion

2. Harvard Values Project (1961)

One of the first published theories of culture was derived by anthropologists **F. R. Kluckhohn and F. L. Strodbeck (1961)**. The basic assumption underlying their theory known as Harvard Values Project is that all people all over the world and throughout ages have had to deal with the challenges of nature in order to survive as all people have to eat, dress, find shelter etc. An important contribution of their theory is that for the first time they made an attempt to find a principal basis for describing the variety of human cultures by introducing the notion of values as a result of seeking for different solutions to commonly shared problems that humanity faces. Kluckhohn and Strodbeck elicit five basic

¹ Available at: <http://www.arlt-lectures.com/onion-is-culture.gif>, retrieved April 2016.

² Available at: iceberg2Culture.gif, retrieved April 2016.

problems called value orientations, core values or concerns, to which cultures could respond in at least three ways, forming three groups where two present opposites and one takes a middle position between the two extremes.

Such a theoretical framework allows them to group human cultures in different sets and create the first global theory of culture. However, it needs mentioning that their study was based on a survey involving only five subcultures in the limited location of the American Southwest involving two Native American tribes, a Hispanic and a Mormon village, and a village of Anglo-American farmers. The narrow scope of the cultures involved definitely limits the empirical material on which their conclusions are drawn.

Based on the analysis of the answers to the first and foremost problem, namely **the relation between man and nature**, cultures are divided into three types where the extremes are **nature-dominating** cultures opposed to **nature-subordinate** cultures. The middle position is described as **harmony with nature** cultures.

The cultures that are dominant over nature act systematically toward adapting nature to their needs thus changing nature in order to survive. Everything from the discovery of the electricity power to the green revolution nowadays has resulted from having met this challenge. Nature-subjugated cultures, on the other hand, accept nature as it is and accommodate to the challenges it provides. Such cultures believe that people cannot really change nature and that life is largely determined by external forces, such as fate and genetics accepting the principle "what happens was meant to happen". The middle group of cultures believe that man should, in every way, live in harmony with nature allowing minor changes.

The second main concern is the **relationship between man and time** that reflects how past, present or future influence the decision making at present. Human cultures are divided into three groups where the main opposition is between **past** and **future cultures**, the middle position taken by **present cultures**. In past-oriented cultures people believe that the values they live by were drawn by history, they should learn from history in making decisions about the present and strive to continue past traditions into the future. On the contrary, the future-oriented cultures' basic belief is that a little sacrifice today will bring a better tomorrow. Planning and goal setting are important values as they make it possible for people to change and grow and make their dreams come true. Finally, present-oriented cultures believe that the present moment is everything while past and future are unimportant for the decision making.

The third value concerns the **relation between man and his actions** and reflects the human beliefs about the mode of activities man takes to achieve their appropriate goals. The two extremes are represented by the so-called **doing cultures** opposed to **being cultures**. In doing cultures people believe that if they work hard and apply themselves fully, their efforts will be rewarded. What a person accomplishes is a measure of the individual's worth, while in being cultures it is enough to just "be." It is not necessary to accomplish great things in life to feel your life has been worthwhile. It is important to note here that the authors mention that each culture may express all three possible responses at a particular section of

time. For example, it is common for Euro-Americans to have a "doing" orientation during the workweek but to have a "being" orientation at weekends.

A medium position take the becoming cultures where it is believed that the main purpose for being placed on this earth is for one's own inner development.

The fourth concern in Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's model refers to the **relationship between man and society**. Cultures are divided into **individualistic** and **lineal (hierarchical)** with **collateral** cultures, which are placed in between the two extremes. Individualistic cultures believe that all people should have equal rights, and each should have complete control over one's own destiny. If a decision is to be made as a group, it should follow the principle "one person one vote." In lineal cultures it is believed that there is a natural order to relations where some people are born to lead, while others are predestined to be followers. In these cultures the decisions are believed to be bound to be made by the leaders. Collateral cultures assume that the best way a society should be organized is as a group, where everyone partakes and shares in the decision process and where it is important not to make important decisions alone.

The fifth value reflects human beliefs about **the essence of human nature**. The two extremes are represented by cultures that believe that human nature is **naturally good** on the one hand, opposed to the cultures that believe that humans are by nature **evil**. People in cultures sharing the trust in the good-nature of humans believe that people are born good and most are basically pretty good at heart during their lifetime. On the contrary, the evil-oriented cultures believe that most people are basically bad, they cannot be trusted and need to be controlled. The medium position takes the **mixed** type of cultures assuming that there are both evil people and good people in the world, and one has to check people out to find out which they are. They also share the common belief that man can be changed with the right guidance.

It is worth pointing out here that the problem of the nature of human being is unique and has never been touched upon in later theories although, or possibly because, it may be closely related to the type of dominant religious system in a society which has become quite a contentious and delicate issue for political correctness reasons especially in recent years.

The last and not very much discussed in the available literature concern of Kluckhohn is the **relation of man to space**. Space is divided into **here, there** and **far away** and the cultures are divided into **public space cultures** as opposed to **private space cultures**. **Mixed cultures** take the medium position.

3. Intercultural Communication Theory

In his pivotal book "Silent language" the founder of the intercultural communication theory Edward Hall stated: "Culture is communication and communication is culture" (Hall 1959: 186). He introduces six factors along the lines of which the classification of national cultures is considered: **high context cultures vs low context cultures; monochronic vs polychronic cultures; personal space variation (proxemics); fast vs slow messages; fast vs slow information flow** and last but not least, **action chains**.

Hall's survey included four different cultures from three continents: Germany and France, the USA and Japan which widens the diversity of the cultures to be considered bringing to a more reliable and relevant cultural parameters. Three of Hall's dimensions are still widely used to distinguish between the verbal and non-verbal behaviour of different cultures in intercultural communication practices and cross-cultural management training. These are the **high-context versus low-context cultures**, **proxemics** and **monochronic versus polychronic cultures**. The first two are directly related to the use of language and body language, while the third one relates to the common attitudes of a particular group of people to time. The other three dimensions, namely **fast vs slow messages**, **fast vs slow information flow** and **action chains** are in subtle correlation with verbal and non-verbal behaviour.

In **low context cultures** information is communicated explicitly and words tend to retain their basic meaning. Speech is generally characterized by lack of metaphors and use of figurative meaning of the words. The conversation usually follows a structure where the ideas are presented in compartments that have a clear structure and where the starting point is the general idea developed later by presenting specific details. A typical low-context culture example in English can be the opening of an essay, describing a house, e.g.: *A large semi-detached house with a garage, drive-way and a huge garden...*³

In high context cultures information is communicated implicitly, meaning that messages are placed within context. Context includes everything: history, social background, relationship, status etc. In high context cultures starting with the context is a dominant preference in human interaction. As the context may contain various elements the text is hardly separable into compartments, main points and details are amalgamated in one holistic picture. A typical example of expression in high context culture is the following opening of a high-context student's essay about a house: *There are many nice people in the house [...]. People eat together. When I come the lights are still on*⁴. One key feature of communication in high context cultures is, as words are not considered important, non-verbal communication is typically considered more significant than verbal.

Cultures are divided into **territorial** and **communal space** types according to the personal space (**proxemics**) dimension often measured in meters. Territorial cultures such as UK, US and Japan need more and clearly delineated personal space between themselves and others. In communal cultures the participants share their personal space with others as in Arab countries and Latin America, for example.

The distinction between **monochronic** and **polychronic** cultures is based on the general preference of people to perform one task at a time or many tasks simultaneously. In monochronic cultures such as US, Scandinavia etc., tasks are set in a certain order and fulfilled in order of importance, while in polychronic cultures

³ Example cited after Nunez, C., R. N.Mahdi and L. Pompa 2014: 26.

⁴ Ibid.:27

time is relative and multitasking is the usual way humans act in order to achieve their goals.

Hall's major contribution is that he is the only one who focuses on language use and body language and suggests that they are core parameters distinguishing one culture from another, while the rest of the theories do not deal with language, obviously considering it a side effect of other dimensions.

4. Theory of Cultures and Organizations

In the first version of Hofstede's Theory of cultures and organizations he states that "Culture is the collective programming of the mind, which distinguishes the members of one group [...] of people from another." (Hofstede, 1997: 5). The theory has developed on three stages since 1980 (Hofstede 1980). Initially the theory introduced four dimensions along which national cultures could be distinguished, namely **individualism**, **power distance**, **masculinity** and **uncertainty avoidance**. In 1991 as a result of a new research in collaboration with Michael Bond the fifth dimension, **time-orientation**, was added. Finally **indulgence** was included in 2010 as a sixth dimension thank to the contribution of the Bulgarian scholar Michael Minkov who has worked closely with Hofstede on his team.

On the initial stage Hofstede's theory was based on survey including 117 000 IBM employees in 50 countries located in three world regions. On the second stage other 23 countries were added, and on the third stage their number reached 93 from countries all over the world, which makes quite a representable sample of world cultures.

Every national culture is estimated along the six dimensions with individual scores where the highest is 100 and the lowest is 0. In this way an individualistic culture, for example, is supposed to be any that scores higher than 50 and is thus opposed to collectivist culture which is any one that scores lower than 50. This system based on scores is applied to every dimension. By creating comparative scales one has the opportunity to compare cultures systematically and in a more objective way. Such a statistical approach made Hofstede's theory the most popular theoretical framework at present that is widely used by different researchers such as anthropologists, ethnologists, linguists and cultural educators in business and management.

In **individualistic societies** people tend to prefer a loosely-knit social framework. Their self-image is defined in terms of "I". In collectivist societies, on the contrary, people are closely related with particular groups and prefer a "we" self-image. In individualist societies people are supposed to look after themselves and their direct family only, while in **collectivist societies** people belong to 'in-groups' that take care of them in exchange for loyalty, while others are recognized as belonging to 'out-of-the group'.

Power Distance expresses the attitude of a culture towards the existing social inequalities. In **low-power distance cultures** hierarchical organizations are accepted as normal. The ideal boss is a "good father" who supervises and helps you, he/she is highly visible and tells you what to do. However, they have to prove themselves in order to make people respect and accept their decisions. In **high**

power distance cultures it is believed that hierarchy reflects inherent social inequalities. Centralization is taken for granted and undisputable; subordinates expect to be told what to do; the ideal boss is a benevolent autocrat and his/her decisions cannot be refuted.

Uncertainty Avoidance relates to the way that a society deals with the fact that the future can never be known. This ambiguity brings with it anxiety whose degree varies across cultures.

In the societies characterized by **high uncertainty avoidance** there are rigid codes of belief and behaviour. In these cultures there is an emotional need for rules, even if the rules never seem to work. Time is money and people have an inner urge to be busy and work hard, precision and punctuality are the norm. As security is the basis of individual motivation, unorthodox behaviour and ideas are not tolerated and innovation is generally resisted.

On the contrary, cultures with **low uncertainty avoidance** index maintain a more relaxed attitude in which practice counts more than principles. Innovations are expected and tolerated as a way to success.

Masculinity relates to what motivates people: wanting to be the best or liking what you are doing. The former are defined as masculine cultures, and the latter as feminine cultures, respectively.

Masculine cultures are driven by competition and achievement. Success is defined by the winner and is demonstrated by status symbols like cars, impressive houses, clothes etc. People work hard to achieve a high living standard and are expected to “show their achievements”. Long working hours and dedication to work are a necessity. **Feminine cultures**, in contrast, tend to share dominant values such as well-being and caring for others. Quality of life is itself a sign of success and is more important than the standard of living. Standing out from the crowd is not admirable. The focus is on “working in order to live”. Incentives such as free time and flexibility are favoured.

Term Orientation relates to how a society maintains its links with its own past while dealing with the challenges of the present and future. **Long term orientation** characterizes normative societies preferring to maintain time-honoured traditions and norms and view societal change with suspicion. **Short term orientation** designates cultures that take a more pragmatic approach, they encourage thrift and efforts as a way to prepare for the future; they are able to adapt traditions easily to changed conditions, and show strong propensity to save and invest.

Indulgence is the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses. Relatively weak control is called “indulgence” and relatively strong control is called “restraint”. **Indulgence cultures** show relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life, having fun and thus put much emphasis on leisure time. **Restraint countries** have a tendency to cynicism and pessimism and control the gratification of their desires. People’s actions are restrained by social norms and they feel that indulging themselves is somewhat wrong.

It needs mentioning here that one drawback of Hofstede's theory is that it is based solely on examination of corporate business relations. This to some extent limits the validity of the generalizations and the scores ascribed to every culture as they may be quite valid for the business world of a particular society, but may appear not to be applicable to the national culture as a whole.

5. Theory of Values Inventory

S. Schwartz's theory of Values inventory evolved shortly after the initial version of Hofstede's model. It was published fully in 2006 in an article summarizing his findings published partially between 1994 and 2004. His theory of national cultures is organized along "seven cultural value orientations that form three cultural value dimensions" (Schwartz 2006: 138).

The empirical data that validate his theory are collected from 73 countries and are based on a survey involving teachers and students. Despite the big number of the countries involved the limited choice of social groups to be studied may be seen as a shortcoming for the validity of the theory.

Schwartz warns that the prevailing cultural value orientations in his theory represent ideals and are derived "from a priori theorizing and then testing the fit of these orientations to empirical data" (ibid.).

The three value dimensions correspond to three critical societal problems that confront all societies. First, this is the nature of **the relation** or the boundaries **between the person and the group**; second, **how to guarantee that people behave in a responsible manner** that preserves the social fabric; and third, what regulates how people manage their **relations to the natural and social world**.

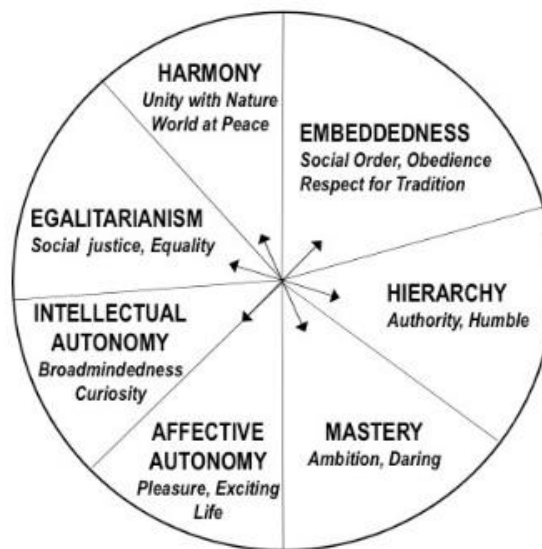
Along the lines of the first problem cultures are divided into the basic opposition between **autonomy** versus **embeddedness**. In **autonomous cultures** people feel free "to express their own preferences, feelings, ideas [...]" (ibid.: 140). They are conscious of their own uniqueness. Autonomy is further divided into two subtypes: affective and intellectual. **Affective autonomy** involves values such as exciting and varied way of life and pleasure, while **intellectual autonomy** relates to creativity, curiosity and out-of-the-box way of thinking. **Embeddedness** characterizes cultures where the individual is part of a group where all strive for common goals and avoid actions that may threaten the social stability and the solidarity among the group members. "Important values in such cultures are social order, respect for tradition, security, obedience, and wisdom." (ibid.)

The results of the survey related to the second problem divides national cultures into two polar types: **egalitarian** and **hierarchical**. In **egalitarian cultures** individuals see others as equals who share common interests as humans. Being morally equal individuals are believed to act for the benefit and the welfare of every other individual. The prevailing values in such societies are equality, social justice, responsibility and honesty. In **hierarchical cultures** social fabric is preserved by the common effort on the part of the individuals to coordinate their efforts within the group, to respect the welfare of the society and engage in productive activities to maintain it. This is achieved through existing hierarchies with unequal distribution of power where social roles are strictly ascribed for every

individual. The prevailing values in such cultures are social power, authority, humility, and wealth.

The third basic problem concerns the regulation of humans' behaviour toward other individuals and nature. Cultures are divided into two basic groups: cultures of **harmony** and cultures of **mastery**. **Harmony cultures** make efforts to understand the world around and to fit into it instead of changing or exploiting it. The most important values in such cultures include living in peace and protecting the environment. **Mastery cultures**, in contrast, strive to change the natural and societal environment in order to accomplish the individual's or the group's objectives. The prevailing values in mastery societies are competition, ambition and daring.

Compared to Hofstede's model, Schwartz's theory seems to be more generally-culture oriented. Thus it seems to be considered equally suitable for considering both social relations in a structured (business oriented) and unstructured (everyday relations) environment. Another advantage of his theory is that it escapes the overlapping between different dimensions that lead to one and the same behavioural cues. By admitting the lack of rigid delineation between the parameters he proposes a circular model, where the interdependent dimensions are adjacent while the polar ones are opposing (see the figure below). This gives more freedom of interpretation to researchers who chose his theory as a framework for investigation.



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6. Trompenaars and Turner's Model of National Culture Differences

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's model (1997) was based on a survey involving over 8 500 managers of Shell in 43 countries and aimed at identifying

⁵ Available at: <https://auniversewithin.wordpress.com/tag/hofstede/>, retrieved May 2016.

both cultural values and personal relationships across cultures. As a result 7 cultural dimensions were isolated where cultures are described in polar oppositions. The first five dimensions reflect various relationships among people, the sixth one deals with the relation between people and time, and the seventh focuses on society's relationship with nature.

First, cultures are divided into such with high universalism opposed to cultures with high particularism. **Universalism** presupposes that the society believes that ideas and practices should be applied to every social sphere without modification, while **particularism** adopts the view that practices and ideas are subjugated to particular circumstances and should be changed according to them.

The second opposition is **individualism** versus **collectivism**. **Individualism** presupposes a focus on individual achievement and independence whereas **collectivism** is concerned by group achievement and welfare.

The third dimension relates to the extent to which individuals' social roles are categorized or incorporated. Cultures belong to either **specific** or **diffuse** types. In **specific cultures** a clear separation of the person's various roles is observed, while **diffuse cultures** are characterized by integration of the person's various roles. This dimension closely correlates with Hall's concept of space. Specific cultures allow wider public space and small private space for the individual, while in diffuse cultures the public and the private space equal.

The fourth dimension opposes **achievement** versus **ascription** cultures. It relates to how individuals gain social status and respect in their cultures. In **achievement cultures** the respect to the individual based on his/her earned accomplishments, while in **ascription cultures** respect and social status depend on the given or inherited status.

The fifth dimension relates to what the extent to which individuals feel free to express their emotions in public is. According to this dimension cultures are divided into **neutral** and **affective** (emotional). People in **neutral cultures** avoid showing emotions in public and tend to 'keep stiff upper lip', whereas people from **affective cultures** show and are encouraged to show their emotions openly, they often smile, laugh, curse and generally speak loudly in public.

The sixth dimension is related to **time orientation** and more precisely to time management. Cultures are divided into two groups: **past/present oriented** opposed to **future oriented**. **Past/present** oriented cultures tend to put emphasis on past victories and glory, while **future oriented cultures** focus on present planning in order to achieve future results.

The last seventh's dimension concerns the relationship of man and the environment. Cultures fall into two opposing groups: **inner-directed** and **outer-directed**. **Inner-directed cultures** tend to control environment, while **outer-directed** cultures prefer not interfering with environment and living in harmony with it. This last dimension almost fully correlates with Schwartz's opposition mastery vs harmony cultures.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's theory based on Hofstede's initial model and builds upon it. It may be seen as an attempt sophisticate Hofstede's cultural dimensions by involving some of Kluckhohn's, Schwartz's and Hall's

indices. However, the social sample seems to be limited and restricted within highly structured working environment.

7. House et al GLOBE Project

The project Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness Research abbreviated GLOBE was also based on Hofstede's cultural dimensions of 1992 and devised by Professor Robert J. House (House et al 2004). The international survey involved 17,300 managers in 951 organizations in 62 world cultures. As a result of the survey nine cultural competencies were identified and the 62 countries were grouped in ten societal clusters or cultures, based on shared similarities including geographical location and climate conditions as the latter were claimed to be influential for the particular cultures' perception and behaviour.

As a result the following **cultural clusters** were identified: **Anglo Cultures, Arab Cultures, Confucian Asia cultures, Eastern Europe, Germanic Europe** subdivided into *Dutch-speaking and German-speaking*, **Latin America, Latin Europe, Nordic Europe, Southern Asia** and **Sub-Sahara Africa**.

The nine cultural competencies identified by GLOBE are **performance orientation, assertiveness orientation, future orientation, humane orientation, collectivism subdivided into institutional and in-group collectivism, gender egalitarianism, power distance and uncertainty avoidance**.

While several of these dimensions (or orientations) such as future orientation, uncertainty avoidance and power distance have been identified earlier, there are new unique parameters such as *gender egalitarianism* and *performance orientation* (Nardon and Steers 2009: 6). The distinction between *institutional and in-group collectivism* also seems to be fruitful for discriminating different types of individuals' behaviour depending on whether they act in public or in their private space. The three new dimensions may prove to be important distinctive features of particular national cultures.⁶

8. Constants and Variables in Cultural Theories: summary

Studying the different theories of culture and the various models of national cultures one observes a lot of similarities both in the terminology used and the definitions of the specific parameters presented by the different authors. What is more, even when different terms are used the ideas behind them are obviously based on conjoint concepts. Then the question arises: Is culture theory really a jungle? Or there are a number of commonly agreed concepts underlying every model? Are the differences mainly due to the perspectives from which each of the theoreticians approaches the problem of cultural modelling according to what practical needs they pursue or which facet of culture is in the main focus of their interest?

⁶ Finally, House and his team elicit six culturally related dimensions of implicit leadership which are put aside here as they are irrelevant for the goals of this paper. For more information see McDonald et al 2009; Hayes, P. 2011.

If one agrees with the latter, then it is both senseless and unnecessary to evaluate culture models or put them in order of importance according to their applicability to describing national cultures. One further warning is that none of these global theoretical models has ever claimed that it is able to capture the subtle specifics of a national culture. Another undeniable fact is that the theories that evolved as a result of financially-subsidized projects aim mainly at describing human behaviour in a structured environment. They derive their dimensions in order to bring to understanding different cultures whose main purpose is to find means to facilitate the communication in international business on a global scale. Finally, it needs pointing out that none of them have ever claimed to have made an attempt to explain the idiosyncratic behaviour of an individual within a given culture.

As seen from the description above there are several themes that recur in most of the theories: the place of the individual within the society, the societal structure, the relation between groups in the social structure, the means of control that society uses to keep it working, the relation between man and environment, and the attitudes of the society to time and space. First, the relation between the individual and the society, as well as the attitude to the environment are two parameters considered basic in five of the theories except in Hall's, which gives ground to suggest that they belong to the core cultural values. Second, the structure of the society dividing human cultures into hierarchical and non-hierarchical, is also found in all theories except in Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's, which also makes it belonging to the core values of one global theory of culture. Finally, time orientation dividing cultures into past and future oriented ones exists in all theories except in Schwartz's. Then the basic oppositions that are delineated despite the different terms and some differences in their interpretation in the six theories seem to be **collective vs individual** cultures, **hierarchical vs non-hierarchical** cultures, **dominating vs non-dominating** the environment, and **past vs future** cultures.

In addition to these shared dimensions every theory introduces unique ones. Such is, for example, Hall's division between high and low context cultures as already mentioned. It is a major contribution to the theory of culture and effective tool to investigate how language reflects culture on the one hand, and how culture reflects language, on the other. As language is undoubtedly an intrinsic part of national culture, I believe that Hall's opposition between **high and low context** cultures should be added to the global model.

The geographical clusters introduced by GLOBE also seem to present a fruitful basis for further investigation of the relation between language and culture in different geographical and historically established locations. With these additions a general framework for comparing and contrasting national cultures can be devised based on the above-mentioned five basic oppositions and taking in consideration geographical (and religious) cultural clustering.

As already mentioned above the six theories of culture approach the problem from different perspectives and put emphasis on different elements. Thus each of them have advantages and disadvantages and should be chosen carefully depending on which facet of social life is to be investigated. Hofstede's, Trompenaars' and GLOBE's theories that are based on corporate behaviour seem

to be more suitable for studying human societies in the sphere of business relations, institutional and leadership management (Javidan and Dastmalchian 2009) . Schwartz's theory, which puts emphasis on societal development, may prove more efficient than the others if research is conducted in order to investigate major societal changes such as transformations from an autocratic and centralized type to a more democratic one, as is the case with Eastern Europe, for example. Interesting data concerning cultural changes are also found in Trompenaars' analysis, showing that despite Hofstede's claim that cultures are stable and do not undergo dramatical changes causing a shift from one type to another, Mexico has shifted from a typically collectivist to a relatively individualist culture due to its membership in NAFTA and participation in the global economy (Luthans and Jonathan 2012: 125-126).

A final note is, as already mentioned, none of the theories analyzed above touches upon the question of the relation between the cultural dimensions and the religion of a society or a group of societies sharing a religion. However, I believe that the universal dimensions are intrinsically related to the canons and the values rooted in the different religious ideologies, which makes future investigation along these lines noteworthy.

9. Conclusions

It needs mentioning that in the era of further globalization enhanced by the new waves of migration in various parts of the world it is extremely important to carry on with investigation of cultures in order to secure better understanding and to avoid cultural clash as much as possible. A thorough research of the relation between national identities and national cultures may shed light on the difficulties the world faces with the advanced political, social and demographic developments in Europe and the world. This may lead to reinterpretation of some traditional concepts such as acculturation, integration and even multiculturalism.

It seems that the classification of cultures based on individual's identities (not included here as it needs a separate study) dividing cultures in melting pot versus mosaic is somewhat outdated and it seems that the global tendency is to move towards a hodge-podge type of societies whose culture is a disorderly mixture (ibid.). As MacLachlan puts it: "We seek to mix up identities, perhaps ending up in a sort of spiced-up Irish stew." (MacLachlan, 2003: p. 33). The traditional acculturation is only one answer to clearing up the cultural differences but it does not work when international relations in different social spheres are involved and when "[...] borrowing and lending across porous cultural boundaries" observed in the distant 1988 by Rosaldo, is even more intense in the middle 20s of the 21st century (Rosaldo 1988:87). Russo, while discussing Kluckhohn's and Strodtbeck value orientation model (VOM) emphasizes on another "most immediate, effective and fair" alternative: "to understand ourselves, to understand the "others," and then to explore the ways of "finding the middle ground" (Russo 2000: 165-177) in order to establish a stable foundation for mutual understanding and tolerance.

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