

Cultural Foundation for Change

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Introduction

When studying sociology it is essential to define the boundaries of the society under analysis. Moreover, once we define a social group, it is possible to subdivide that group into further subgroups each with a set of unique characteristics that form the boundaries of the subgroup. As we define subgroups, it is possible to establish overlapping groupings that share some common characteristics while differing in other characteristics. All aspects of the environment within the group's boundary form the culture that is unique to that group. At this point, the focus shifts from broad social constructs to the intra-group activity that makes up organizational culture.

Within this paper, the focus is on the different ways we can define culture and the possible dimensions used to define the culture. Much of the research reviewed and presented here concerns cultural differences between different countries with extension made to application in smaller cultural groupings or organizations. For clarification, the cultural attributes that define the uniqueness of a subgroup of a larger social construct is called organizational culture. Some authors prefer to use the term "corporate culture" or will use corporate culture interchangeably with organizational culture. The word "corporate" has two definitions that contribute to the interchangeable use (Mish, et. al., 1988, p. 292). First is the common form associated with a legal entity, which segments corporate groups from other legal groupings or groups not defined under legal covenants. Because this definition limits the scope for applying the research, this author prefers to use the second definition of corporate, related to the forming of a unified body of individuals. This is broader and picks up a biological component that results from human interaction.

Definitions of Culture

To go forward, a basic understanding of what defines or describes culture will be required. Gudykunst (1997) said

There are many definitions of culture but, to date, no consensus has emerged on one definition. Culture can be seen as including everything that is human made or as a system of shared meanings to name only two possible conceptualizations. (p. 3)

Trompenaars (1994, p. 14) took the second approach where "culture is a shared system of meanings. It dictates what we pay attention to, how we act, and what we value." Within this framework, culture is our mechanism of bringing understanding to our environment and how we interact within the environment. Trompenaars (1994) captures the element of human control in "culture is the way in which people solve problems" (p. 7). This recognizes the existence of common problems across different societies and organizations that can be approached differently developing cultural differences through identifying different solutions to similar problems (Trompenaars, 1994, pp. 29-30). Segall, Dasen, and Poortinga (1990) expands on the aspect of human interaction as being a critical component of culture:

Human behavior is fundamentally social, involving (a) relationships with other people, (b) their behavior, and (c) various products of their behavior. All of these are social stimuli, since they involve other people. But other species are also social animals. Human beings are cultural as well as social. . .

Those social stimuli that are the products of the behavior of other people essentially constitute culture. (p. 5)

These behavioral components include learning to recognize behavioral patterns and then determining what behavioral response is called for in the situation and the manner in which we respond. These behavioral aspects of culture are observable through "subsistence patterns; social and political institutions; languages; rules governing interpersonal relations; divisions of labor by sex, age, or ethnicity; population density; dwelling styles; and more" (Segall, Dasen, and Poortinga, 1990, pp. 26-27). The identity of the culture is dependent on the people who make up the community and their behaviors. Hall said, "culture is communication and communication is culture" (as cited in Gudykunst, 1997, p. 3) combining all behavioral aspects, both verbal and non-verbal into a unity that describes culture. In summary, the core elements that make up culture include:

- A common understanding that the individual develops naturally through socialization, providing intergenerational continuity. This is a "continuous, cumulative, and progressive" process (Segall, Dasen, and Poortinga, 1990, p. 26).
- A learning process that is subtle and not recognizable as a distinct course of study but accepted as the norm. Segall, Dasen, and Poortinga (1990) describes this as "the totality of whatever all persons learn from all other persons" (p. 26).
- A guide for behavior that is situational. Shared knowledge, behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes that are adaptive in that they are capable of mutating over time to be applicable to new situations.

Collectively, all aspects of culture are taken for granted and are not recognizable without an explicit attempt to step outside of one's participation in the culture so that it can be observed externally. Any attempt to observe the culture as an insider runs the risk of overlooking the numerous aspects of the culture that are invisible because they are so accepted as part of normality. When you first observe a culture, you do not see the underlying beliefs and values. What we see is how these beliefs and values are reflected in material items, language, and behavior. The true culture hides beneath the surface.

To this point, culture has been discussed within the context of large societies. Shifting from society to smaller organizational structures Talcott Parsons observed that "organizations have to adapt not simply to the environment but also to the views of participating employees" (Trompenaars, 1994, p. 16). The study of culture within organizations therefore includes the components of culture in society at large combined with uniqueness associated with higher interdependencies among the members of the organization. Additional working definitions include:

- "Shared, taken-for-granted implicit assumptions that a group holds and that determines how it perceives, thinks about, and reacts to its various environments" (Schein, 1996, p. 236).
- "Social organization is defined here as a system of social roles. Role is defined by social norms" (Gold, 1997, p. 71). Culture extends beyond a system of shared beliefs and values that reside in people and includes the bonds between individuals in the group that affects all interpersonal interactions. Culture manifests itself in material and behavioral components that can be studied (pp. 117-119). "As few as two people may share a culture; it does not seem useful to require that there be more" (p. 120). As used by Gold, a shared belief extends beyond a "consensus of opinion" to include "an awareness about the consensus" (p. 120).

- Trice and Beyer define organizational culture as a collective of two components. "The first is the substance of a culture – shared, emotionally charged belief systems that we call ideologies. The second is cultural forms – observable entities, including actions, through which members of culture express, affirm, and communicate the substance of their culture to one another" (as cited in Carroll & Harrison, 1998, p. 18). In this context, beliefs are the foundation for possible cognitive diversity and social integration is the result of the organization's social practices.

Cultural Dimensions

In cross-cultural research, it is necessary to settle on the variables used to describe cultural differences. Once different nationalities are described along cultural dimensions it is possible to isolate the differences as explanations for behaviors that vary. In studying cultural differences between countries, Hofstede and Trompenaars stand out as two researchers who have developed extensive databases that now serve as the foundation for additional research. While both of these researchers directed themselves to studying international cultural differences, much of their approach applies to smaller organizational structures as well. It is also important to note that variability does exist within each culture along each dimension. Instead, we use the mean of the quantitative measure without introducing the issue of variability around the mean. Strong & Weber (1998) addressed this failure to recognize the variability within the social group. Of course, within any society or organization there will be both informal and formal social pressures that pull all group members toward the norm as quantified in each of the cultural dimensions. However, some members of the society will refuse to adopt the cultural norm or attempt to change the norm in a direction that they find more admirable. Therefore, in discussing cultural characteristics what is discussed are the dominant attributes of the society as a whole and not necessarily the entire society.

Hofstede's International Study

Hofstede was the first researcher to undertake large-scale, multi-cultural studies, frequently referenced in cross-cultural studies. Within his research, Hofstede conceptualized four cultural dimensions for describing differences between nations. These are (a) individualism-collectivism, (b) uncertainty avoidance, (c) power distance, and (d) masculinity-femininity. (A fifth dimension called Confucianism is often included when referencing Hofstede's body of research.) Each cultural dimension describes a set of attributes of national cultures. These same cultural dimensions also assist in understanding possible cultural barriers that may exist in implementing an organizational change initiative. In examining the cross-cultural research it seems that in Hofstede's data analysis, individualism-collectivism and power distance appear to "be manifestations of the same underlying dimension" (Smith, Dugan, & Trompenaars, 1996, p. 233). However, because Hofstede and many of the researchers that have followed do treat these cultural dimensions as separate dimensions in their articles the discussion that follows examines each cultural dimension as being independent of the others.

Within "individualistic cultures, the needs, values, and goals of the individual take precedence over the needs, values, and goals of the ingroup" (Gudykunst, 1997, p. 12). Within collectivistic cultures, the group takes precedence over the individual. As in all cultural dimensions, the actual situation is not one extreme or the other, but a mix of both with

a central tendency somewhere within the range. To some extent, collectivism is situational and related to the number of possible groups to which the individual may identify. As the number of group options increase the individual becomes more important as group loyalty splits between the many options. These group options may include "family, religion, social clubs, or profession, to name only a few" (p. 13). With few options, or a couple of group options more important there is more opportunity and social pressure to support a collectivistic attitude. "People in individualistic cultures tend to be universalistic and apply the same value standards to all. People in collectivistic cultures, in contrast, tend to be particularistic and apply different value standards to ingroups and outgroups" (p. 13). The values that are important in individualistic cultures are "power, achievement, self-direction, hedonism, and stimulation" (p. 33). "Tradition, conformity, and benevolence serve collective interests" (p. 33). While individuals may possess a mix of both individualistic and collectivistic characteristics, the society will have a dominant tendency. Further, serving the interests of the larger collective is not necessary in lieu of serving individual interests in that there may be mutual benefit of being interdependent within the group. This involves the socialization process that yields a self-concept of the individual relative to others in the society. Within an organizational setting, collectivistic attitudes favor change to a more team oriented approach to work. In addition, individualistic attitudes will favor workers working in isolation from others and evaluated on their ability to solve problems quickly without the need of outside assistance.

Hofstede characterized members of cultures high in uncertainty avoidance as having a relatively low tolerance "for uncertainty and ambiguity, which expresses itself in higher levels of anxiety and energy release, greater need for formal rules and absolute truth, and less tolerance for people or groups with deviant ideas or behavior" (as cited in Gudykunst, 1997, p. 15). The development of rules is important because rules provide an answer or procedure for possible situations. "Rituals that are developed in high uncertainty avoidance cultures provide clear scripts for interaction and allow individuals to attune their behavior with outgroup members" (p. 16). This eliminates the uncertainty as to action when a situation arises. An orientation toward uncertainty is also responsible for open mindedness and a search for additional information.

People with a closed mind, in contrast, "need to ward off threatening aspects of reality" and they are certainty oriented. This often is accomplished by ignoring new information. Uncertainty-oriented people are interested in reducing uncertainty, whereas certainty-oriented people try to avoid looking at uncertainty when it is present. Uncertainty-oriented people integrate new and old ideas and change their belief systems accordingly. They evaluate ideas and thoughts on their own merit and do not necessarily compare them with others. . . . Certainty-oriented people . . . like to hold on to traditional beliefs and have a tendency to reject ideas that are different. Certainty-oriented people maintain a sense of self by not examining themselves or their behavior. (p. 44-45)

Within an organization, high uncertainty avoidance results in a highly bureaucratic operating style with strict adherence to hierarchy. Any change initiative will be more difficult in organizations with high uncertainty avoidance levels because of their unwillingness to accept new information and change their belief system. On the other hand, organizations low in uncertainty avoidance will accept change more readily, but might balk at attempts toward

standardization and control even when the situation may be close to being dangerously out of control. Uncertainty avoidance may also affect the organizational decision-making process. Organizations that are highly risk adverse may do an excessive amount of analysis prior to making a decision thereby missing some opportunities. Acceptance of more risk in the decision-making process allows decisions to be made quicker, but also requires closer monitoring of results to confirm the correctness of the decision and the assumptions that were made in the quick decision-making process.

"Power distance is defined as 'the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations accept that power is distributed unequally'" (Hofstede & Bond as cited in Gudykunst, 1997, p. 18). Individuals within high or large power distance cultures will accept large differences in the allocation of power, wealth, and other resources. Coercion is accepted as normal behavior and orders from superiors are not questioned. In organizational settings, this allows quick decision-making and movement toward implementation when in crisis. However, it also assumes that the leaders are all-knowing and are capable of always making the right decisions. It also requires leaders to be close to all situations because subordinates may not take the necessary actions without guidance or approval from their superiors. Training of leaders in high power distance cultures is also difficult because opportunities to practice decision-making and leadership at lower levels are not often available yet this experience is assumed when promoted to higher levels. Organizations with low power distance face the opposite issues in decision-making and organizational change. Sometimes the willingness (and ability) to question superior's orders will slow down the decision or change process, but will add to commitment once directional agreement is reached. Lower power distance also encourages acceptance of leadership responsibility at all organizational levels. This aids in responding to changing situations without having to wait for a full hierarchical review of the decision.

Hofstede's use of masculinity and femininity to describe the fourth cultural dimension may seem a bit politically incorrect today in America. However, in 1980 and even today in many parts of the world such a stereotypical description brings easy identification.

High masculinity refers to placing a high value on things, power, and assertiveness, whereas systems in which people, quality of life, and nurturance prevail are low on masculinity or high on femininity. Cultural systems high on the masculinity index emphasize differentiated sex roles, performance, ambition, and independence. Conversely, systems low on masculinity value fluid sex roles, quality of life, service, and interdependence. (Gudykunst, 1997, p. 21)

This is describing cultural traits and not necessarily psychological sex roles as stereotypically defined within the culture. While individuals can exhibit different mixes of the cultural masculinity-femininity dimension, the available research on individual-level psychological sex roles has not been systematically linked to this cultural level masculinity-femininity (p. 49-50). At the cultural level within high masculinity societies, groups of the same gender work together easier and are more likely to share confidences than groups with mixed gender. This can cause great difficulty when a global organization moves a management team into a country with a different masculinity-femininity dominance. It can also affect team development and organizational expectation of the degree to which work and personal life are integrated.

Other references to Hofstede's cross-cultural research mention a fifth bipolar cultural dimension. This additional dimension has been called Confucianism and is closely related to attributes found in Eastern cultures and is related to the culture's attitude toward time. Western cultures are more likely to focus on the past and present. On the other hand, Eastern cultures favor more "future-oriented values like thrift, savings and persistence" (Smith, 1998, p. 15).

Hofstede's Organizational Study

Hofstede's 1980 research covered many international countries and was the foundation for the above cultural dimensions. In Hofstede (1998) the research was done at the organizational level in companies in Denmark and the Netherlands isolating six cultural dimensions. These organization cultural dimensions are (a) process vs. results orientation, (b) employee vs. job orientation, (c) parochial vs. professional, (d) open vs. closed system, (e) loose vs. tight control, and (f) normative vs. pragmatic.

Hofstede's first organization cultural dimension touched on goal orientation and how the employee approaches daily activity. Process-oriented cultures are concerned with avoiding risks and prefer routine activities. Their focus is non-job oriented and they exert a limited effort in their job. Those that are results-oriented are comfortable with new challenges and are willing to expend maximum effort on new tasks. When related to Hofstede's international study, elements of uncertainty avoidance are prominent in this organizational dimension.

The second dimension is similar to Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid of employee and job orientation (see Blake & Mouton, 1964). However, instead of treating both factors individually Hofstede combines them into one factor that would equate to a diagonally line from 9,1 to 1,9 across the grid.

In employee oriented cultures people feel their personal problems are taken into account, that the organization takes a responsibility for employee welfare, and that important decisions tend to be made by groups or committees. In the jobs-oriented units, people experience a strong pressure for getting the job done, they perceive the organization as only interested in the work employees do, not in their personal and family welfare; and they report that important decisions tend to be made by individuals. (Hofstede, 1998, p. 10)

This focus on the employee as a person versus a part of the work process is frequently encountered in managerial studies. In attitude, it picks up some elements of the masculinity-femininity dimension that Hofstede encountered in his international study.

The sociological distinction of local versus cosmopolitan with a contrasting view of being internal or external is encountered in the third cultural dimension in Hofstede's organizational study. Parochial cultures blend work life and personal life in the employee selection process and in the parental attitude for care of the employee. "On the other side, members of professional cultures consider their private lives their own business, they feel the organization hires on the basis of job competence only" (p. 11).

Open versus closed systems refers to the openness toward outsiders and newcomers to the organization. Almost everyone is welcome within open cultures. However, closed organizational cultures are "felt to be closed and secretive, even among insiders" (p. 12). In closed organizations, newcomers have a long socialization process until fully accepted by the

organization. This dimension has a profound impact on the type and amount of internal communication within the organization.

The type of management control can be described as loose or tight. In a loose control culture "no one thinks of cost, meeting times are kept only approximately, and jokes about the company and the job are frequent" (p. 13). Tight control cultures exhibit the opposite attitudes toward work and the higher level of seriousness expected.

The last cultural dimension Hofstede found in organizations is a customer orientation that is either pragmatic or normative. "Pragmatic units are market-driven; . . . in the normative units the major emphasis is on correctly following organizational procedures" (p. 14). Business ethics are seen as pragmatic when attempting to focus on customer results and more dogmatic in a normative culture. This dimension relates closely to the process versus results oriented dimension. However, a customer orientation may not necessarily be results oriented, but embedded in the business process. Likewise, a result orientation may focus on a goal other than customer satisfaction.

These six cultural dimensions combine in various ways that can identify different organizational cultures from one organization to another. However, even within an organization there will likely be pockets of different cultures that result from different educational and professional backgrounds of the employees. The nature of the work as being routine or changing also determines different dimensional weightings. The degree of unit interdependence and relationship with outside stakeholders, such as customers, will also affect the cultural development of individual parts of the organization differently. Within the Hofstede (1998) research, three distinctive organizational cultures were identified as operating within the same company, but performing different functions. These three organizational cultures were labeled professional, administrative, and customer interface or, more commonly, managerial, staff, and sales.

Trompenaars' International Study

Fons Trompenaars followed Hofstede with an international culture research project in 43 countries. The countries chosen closely match those used by Hofstede with the addition of some ex-communistic countries. The focus was not only to understand national differences but also to understand how national cultures influenced organizational cultures. Seven cultural dimensions were studied, five dealing with relationships with people, one as an attitude toward time and one as an attitude toward the environment. The five dimensions that dealt with people include universalism, individualism, emotion, involvement, and achievement. Because these dimensions were developed to understand diversity in global business, they are easily applied in understanding organizational culture and managing change within the organization.

Universalism is concerned with the equal application of rules and procedures across the organization and would be associated with low power distance in Hofstede's classification. Conversely, particularism encourages flexibility in adapting to particular situations, which is similar to Hofstede's pragmatism. By dealing with the approach to rules and regulations Trompenaars touches on different factors in Hofstede's classification systems in one sense, but not necessarily so in the converse. In this classification, the rules of right and wrong are either enforced unilaterally or altered for the particular situation, depending on the importance of the issue. As in many sociological studies, the importance of religion in society influences cultural attitudes. In this case, protestant cultures are more likely to be universalistic because

of their belief that man interacts directly with God's written laws without human intervention. Friendship also enters into such a determination in weighting the course of action relative to the level of friendship that may be involved and the importance of the situation relative to the rules. In these cases, there is a trade-off in supporting one position on particular grounds versus the moral and ethical reasons for having the rule in the first place. Everyone will agree that the rule is required for settling the black and white situation. However, the severity in applying the rule to the gray areas becomes the discriminating difference in approach between universalism and particularism. Because these issues are so involved with the particular situation, the Trompenaars research involved a series of independent but related questions.

The second Trompenaars cultural dimension is individualism versus collectivism, which matched Hofstede's individualism dimension. Individualism "encourages individual freedom and responsibility" while collectivism "encourages individuals to work for consensus in the interest of the group" (Trompenaars, 1994, p. 61). The two extremes are balanced by a desire to not "degenerate into self-centeredness or forced compromise" and a "need to avoid conformism and slow decision-making" (p. 61). Religion influences protestant societies toward being more individualistic because of their individual relationship with God. Conversely, Catholics approach God as a community of faithful and are more likely to be collectivistic. Over time, the attitude toward individualism has changed. Adam Smith viewed division of labor as individualism and Max Weber saw it within individualism dignity, self-rule, privacy, and opportunity for personal development. Individualism was once thought to be the key to modern success. In the work done by Lawrence and Lorsch though, the most successful companies were becoming both increasingly differentiated and more highly integrated. Thus, some cultural aspects were individualistic with the need for group collaboration moving other aspects toward collectivism. Increasingly, the direct sharing of ideas and working together on other's ideas are becoming critical success factors in meeting the challenges of organizational change. Trompenaars summarized in writing "my own conviction that individualism finds its fulfillment in service to the group, while group goals are of demonstrable value to individuals only if those individuals are consulted and participate in the process of developing them" (p. 61).

The third cultural dimension is an emotional range of feelings that can vary between being objective and emotionally neutral to being emotionally involved. The downside is that both extremes have problems doing business with each other because of conflicts in expectation of the other. "When such cultures meet, the first essential is to recognize the differences, and to refrain from making any judgments based on emotions, or the lack of them" (Trompenaars, 1994, p. 77). Emotional support provides a direct response to stated feelings. However, neutral support is provided indirectly as a response to stated reasoning. Within this cultural dimension is some similarity to Hofstede's organizational dimension of being employee versus job oriented. By being oriented toward people, the emotional factors rise to the surface, whereas a focus on the job removes the emotional employee issues and concentrates on objective factors involved in the job.

Another cultural dimension that affects interpersonal relationships is the range of involvement, which can vary between specific and diffuse. Some of the issues that are involved in the relationship might be the extent to which the relationship is limited or covers a wide range of topics and interests and the extent to which the relationship is relatively private or public. Specific relationships have a large public area that might be highly compartmentalized. It is relatively easy to enter into relationships, however the relationship

will be limited to the relatively small area of mutual interest, and the depth of the relationship will be relatively shallow and superficial. Do not expect deep, personal relationships within that cultural group. Conversely, relationships in diffuse cultures are difficult to initiate due to the tendency to have a large private area that is not readily exposed to others. However, once the small public surface is successfully breached it opens up a large private area that contains all matter of possible topics. A diffuse relationship is not limited to a compartmentalized topic, but includes the entire private space. There is some similarity to Hofstede's open-closed system orientation in describing how easy it is to establish relationships. However, the diffuse-specific orientation goes much further in detailing the depth of the relationship and the likely problems encountered in mixing cultural styles. A specific person will be disappointed in the effort required to establish a relationship with a diffuse person. In addition, once such a relationship is established, the specific person may be put off by the expectation of the diffuse person to have the relationship extend beyond just the initial topic that led the specific person to establish the relationship in the first place. Likewise, the diffuse person will have difficulty with relationships within specific cultures. The diffuse person may be easily insulted by the specific person thinking more private access has been granted than was really offered. And, once a deep relationship has been established the diffuse person may again be offended by the limited exposure that the specific person has granted in the relationship. The core difference is in the way each approach the establishment of a relationship. The diffuse person will take a high context approach getting to know each other from the general to the specific. The specific person will take a lower context approach moving quickly to a specific topic and gradually move to the general issues as the relationship progresses. (Trompenaars, 1994, pp. 79-99)

The fifth and last interpersonal cultural dimension that Trompenaars discussed is achievement versus ascription. In achievement oriented cultures status is based on recent accomplishments. Ascription cultures may accord status based on possible factors such as profession, education, personal connections to other people, kinship, gender, or age. "Ascribed status simply 'is' and requires no rational justification, although such justifications may exist. . . . That does not mean it is irrational or without competitive advantage, however; it simply means that justifications are not offered and not expected" (Trompenaars, 1994, p. 111). This attitude toward the status quo is similar to that expressed in high power distance cultures. Depending on the basis of ascription, there may also be a relationship to attitudes expressed in Hofstede's masculinity-femininity dimension. High achievement also implies a possible relationship to a results and job orientation in Hofstede's organizational study. One interesting situation that can develop in ascription societies is ascribing status to particular persons, technologies, or industries thereby positioning them as being important to the future. In doing so, a situation of a self-fulfilling prophecy is established with an encouragement to live up to expectations. Achievement is thereby gained through ascription of key attributes of future success (p. 107). This establishes a possible cycle between ascription and achievement with those who are achievement oriented ascribing status to those who have achieved success in the past. Organizational hierarchies are defended in achievement cultures by the skill and knowledge that led to past accomplishments. In ascribing cultures, hierarchies are defended by the ability to control power to get things accomplished in the future. In this case, power may be coercive over people or participative through people.

Attitude toward time is the sixth cultural dimension that Trompenaars discussed and is only present in Hofstede's Confucianism dimension. Trompenaars goes much further than

integrating the past and present to the future. Man's relationship to time includes how time is viewed and the relative importance of the past, present, and future. Technically, there is no past or future, only the way we think about the past and future while living in the present. Where we place our emphasis determines how we live in the present. Collectively, "an important part of creativity is to assemble past and present activities, plus conjectures about the future, in new combinations" (Trompenaars, 1994, p. 120). In viewing time, Emile Durkheim saw time as a social method to enable members of a culture to coordinate their interdependent activities (p. 119). It is then critical that there be a common approach to man's relationship with time to enable such coordination. A key division in how we incorporate a time concept in our life is whether time is seen as flowing sequentially or in a multi-tasking manner. Those who view time sequentially require an orderly sequence to activities with dependencies between activities. On the other hand, if time is viewed in a parallel or polychronic manner multiple activities can be occurring simultaneously. In such a situation, a delay of a dependency in any one activity does not stop activity, but shifts activity toward a parallel activity path. Therefore, in a polychronic culture being late is not necessarily bad because there are other concurrent activities that can be attended to while waiting. In a culture that views time sequentially everything comes to a halt while waiting for the one person who may be late. Also important in the relationship with time is the extent that time is thought to repeat, either in seasonal, daily, or hourly rhythms and the extent that past events are thought to repeat or influence activities in the present. Coping with change has recently placed added value on multi-tasking as a method of making use of time that would otherwise be wasted with interruptions. Synchronic processes therefore gain value under changing conditions that would upset a plan contingent on sequential events. Plans are also more effective when multiple paths to goals can be established. In many organizations, the cultural concept of time will require a conscious change to better equip the organization in meeting competitive threats. Another attitude toward time that Trompenaars did not mention is the cultural response to waiting for rewards whether short-term or long-term (Segall, Dasen, and Poortinga, 1990, p. 229). This balances the time required to receive the reward and the perceived value of the reward relative to current needs.

Also not specifically included in Hofstede's earlier work is a cultural attitude toward the environment and the relationship man has with the environment. At the basic level, the dichotomy is between attempting to live in harmony with a nature seen as being either very powerful or very fragile and attempting to conquer the environment to meet our personal needs. This dimensional measurement ranges between being either internal control for conquering nature or external control for being responsive to external issues. Trompenaars illustrated this difference in attitudes Americans have toward the Sony Walkman when compared to those of the Japanese. In Japan Sony invented the Walkman concept to control noise pollution, keeping the sound from being distracting to others. However, in America the motivating factor is to keep out the external noise that would otherwise interfere with personal enjoyment. While not specifically included by Hofstede there are similarities with the concern for others implicit in being employee or customer oriented. In addition to the relationship with the environment and others, there are implications to attitudes toward property rights. In an outward directed culture, people may hold copying in high regard because the original product or idea is actually owned by the universe and not the individual or company. In this situation, copying and building on the product or idea is seen as adding additional value to what cannot be owned and is therefore not seen as theft. In organizational

change, this cultural dimension can influence the organization's approach to planning. Strategic planning is normally approached with an inward orientation attempting to control as many factors as possible and survive within a changing external environment. An outward approach to strategic planning is to become very consumer or environmentally oriented, devising strategies for coping with the issues that arise daily. This approach develops and tests emergent strategies, giving those strategies that are most effective formal recognition and further promotion. In this way, the environment or customer takes the lead in developing strategy rather than developing strategy deal with the customer environment.

Smith, Dugan, and Trompenaars (1996) used the Trompenaars (1994) database to distill all possible cultural dimensions down to a unified model of culture. In the analysis, a number of factors collapsed together leaving just three dimensions of culture that were significant. These were (a) power distance or the preservation of the power structure, (b) individualism-collectivism, and (c) a number of weak issues that do not form a single clear definition for a cultural dimension. (Smith, Dugan, and Trompenaars, 1996) This raises the issue of explanation through a concise equation that explains culture versus an understanding of how different cultures behave in different situations. Because of the number of issues that may arise in understanding culture and its impact to aid organizational change or present a barrier to the change, the focus here will continue to be an understanding in various scenarios. While this may not yield a unified cultural model, it does aid in understanding how cultures can vary and which factors may come into play in different situations.

Eastern Culture

Most cross-culture studies have been designed and executed in Western cultures. By design, they have therefore excluded cultural dimensions that are unique to Eastern cultures. In the 1980s, a study was conducted in China for the purpose of identifying dimensions of Eastern culture and comparing the dimensions to those identified by Hofstede. The four cultural dimensions that discovered were integration, Confucian work dynamism, human-heartedness, and moral discipline. (Segall, Dasen, and Poortinga, 1990, pp. 57-58) There is a strong positive relationship between human-heartedness and Hofstede's masculinity. Moreover, Hofstede's individualism-collectivism dimension is lost as a unique classification within the Eastern culture. However, the individuality that is dominant in the Western Protestant ethic that accounts for achievement and economic growth has a counterpart in the Eastern culture not found in Western cultures. This is the Confucian work dynamism, a factor strongly related to high economic growth and based on ethics and respect for others working together in groups. The Confucianism dimension mentioned by Hofstede is similar to this group awareness but more related to the interconnectedness of events over time. In this research, integration examines how cultural aspects themselves are inter-related. This is a more thoughtful understanding of cultural connections, which would also pick up the time component Hofstede mentioned. In examining cultural differences, it becomes evident that different cultures have approached economic success along different paths.

Cultural Structure and Roles

Hofstede and Trompenaars described culture by identifying a multi-dimensional classification system that allows each culture to be identified somewhere between two extremes that make up each dimensional scale. This placement of a culture uses the mean for the cultural dimension, ignoring the variance around the mean actually found in the culture.

Gold (1997) discussed this issue of cultural variance within the framework of cultural structure and roles. The five measurements of variance in social roles identified were consensus, formality, sanction potential, rigidity-flexibility, and scope (Gold, 1997, pp. 74-78). Consensus is the degree to which the group shares a common understanding of individual roles. Formality describes the degree to which cultural norms are codified, making them harder to change. Over time as informal rules become widely accepted or seen as critical to the success of social or organizational goals they will likely be formalized and then imposed on those new to the cultural role. However, this formality of rules does not translate directly into enforcement. The degree to which formal rules are enforced involves the degree of sanction potential. Some informal rules may actually have higher enforcement than ignored written rules. Sanction potential defines the degree to which positive and negative feedback is imposed for non-conformance of the rules. This in turn requires some level of consensus of the role and rules involved. Rigidity-flexibility is the degree to which the role actions are dictated with little ability for the individual to modify personal actions outside the norm. Higher rigidity implies greater ability to apply sanctions because of the social pressure to limit personal choice. Similar to rigidity-flexibility is scope, which specifies the range of actions and feelings allowed in the role. Scope also relates to the extent that roles blend. For example, the blending or separation of work and play can vary within cultural groups and be a determining factor in the group commitment to achieving goals.

Gold (1997, pp. 129-132) also identified six structural aspects of culture that describe how the cultural dimensions relate to each other. These are breadth, complexity, integration, hierarchy, development, and stability. Breadth covers the number of components that are included in the shared beliefs and values. The accuracy of the beliefs is not as important as the degree to which the group shares in the beliefs. Complexity refers to the depth of the argument used to validate the shared beliefs and values. This complexity of argument can vary from a simple statement to inter-related conditional statements that draw a conclusion. Closely related to complexity is the degree to which the beliefs and values are integrated with each other and complement the belief structure of the culture. Hierarchy focuses on the structural subsets that are involved in the larger belief structure. Related to the cultural complexity, integration, and hierarchy is the development time that is required to integrate cultural knowledge into the argument structure that underlies the cultural beliefs and values. Finally, stability addresses the amount of cultural change taking place. The rate of change is often discontinuous with periods of rapid change interspersed with plateaus of relative stability. As the rate of social change goes from stability to rapid change, inter-generation conflict increases as the driver of cultural continuity shifts from the older generation to the next generation. As the younger generation ages there is cultural pressure toward stability that may manifest itself in the society or organization. Of course, some pressure to change will always continue to be exerted by those of the next generation or new to the organization or social power structure.

Implications to Organizational Change

Often culture is treated as just another factor that can easily be changed if it is felt that the culture is getting in the way of a desired organizational change. However, this often overlooks the degree to which culture intertwines into the essence or identity of the organization. In describing past organizational research Schein said

We acknowledged the existence of group norms but failed to note that norms across wider social units such as entire organizations or occupations had a decisive influence on how those systems operated. And if we thought those norms were inimical to "organizational health," we glibly called for leaders to change them. We did not grasp that norms held tacitly across large social units were much more likely to change leaders than to be changed by them. We failed to note that "culture," viewed as such taken-for-granted, shared, tacit ways of perceiving, thinking, and reacting, was one of the most powerful and stable forces operating in organizations. (Schein, 1996, p. 231)

In addition, when encountering cultural barriers in an organizational change initiative, the approach is often to describe the culture in a general manner rather than at the base attribute level. Instead, the cultural observer should evaluate the different attributes of the culture to identify common groupings. Hendry (1999) described sects, hierarchical cultures, and market cultures. The decision-making cultures in Hinings, Thibault, Slack, & Kikulis (1996) were kitchen table, boardroom, and executive office. Trompenaars (1994) isolated four basic organizational cultures, which he called family, Eiffel Tower, guided missile, and incubator. The interpersonal interaction model of culture identifies cultures as being oriented toward power, achievement, support, or role oriented. The risk and feedback model identifies a macho, tough-guy culture, a work-hard and play-hard culture, a bet-the-company culture and a process culture. In all these cases, different combinations of the basic cultural dimensions were observed and described as a unified culture. This is often done in an attempt to develop prescriptive measures for dealing with specific types of cultures. However, by approaching culture in such a high-level manner, subtle cultural issues may be overlooked that might otherwise aid in tearing down cultural barriers that are blocking organizational change.

Summary

While there are many definitions of culture, the one most used is the shared beliefs and values that affect individual and group behavior including language, interpersonal relations, and cultural artifacts. Culture is everything and at the same time, its members do not recognize it.

Particularly in relation to culture, when I see my colleagues inventing questionnaires to "measure" culture, I feel that they are simply not seeing what is there, and this is particularly dangerous when one is dealing with a social force that is invisible yet very powerful. We are in grave danger of not seeing our own culture, our assumptions about methods, about theory, about what is important to study or not study, and in that process, pay too much attention only to what suits our needs. (Schein, 1996, p. 239)

By living in the culture, everything involved in making up the culture is accepted and unnoticed like the air we breathe. One's culture is only recognized when a different culture is encountered or if it is specifically studied. Even then, the study of culture is highly influenced by our experience in the culture and the inability to remove ourselves from the cultural paradigm we live.

The cross-cultural studies by Hofstede and Trompenaars provided a framework that helps categorize different cultures. While these studies focused on international differences,

they also have application in the study of organizational culture. These cultural classifications are dimensional scales with each culture described by the attribute's mean for the cultural group. The variability within the culture around the average and the cultural roles and structure were addressed in the Gold framework for cross-cultural study. The goal has been to see beneath the cultural surface that appears in the behavior, language, and artifacts in an attempt to understand the drivers of culture.

These cultural dimensions were discussed independent of each other, yet with some recognition of how the cultural attributes may be inter-related. By describing culture at the lowest level, it is possible to identify the more subtle differences between cultural groups. This also allows a better understanding of how cultures may be both similar and yet different from each other. For each cultural situation, there is no one right mix of cultural attributes since there are both benefits and detriments in all the cultural dimensions. Heightened awareness of cultural diversity is then possible with the ability to recognize the advantages of different cultural traits. Also gained is an understanding of how culture manifests itself with the ability to identify the pressure points where culture may be influenced toward change.

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