Research Article

Discussion about Temporal Dimension of Selected Cultural Standards

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Abstract

Speaking about the temporal dimentions we have to take into consideration before the dimension of time in the context of cultural standard research is dealt with in more detail, some basic thoughts on the concept of time should be presented. The findings of developmental psychology, perceptual psychology or brain physiology can not be discussed further here. At the center of consideration is the social and cultural dimension, ie the superindividual level of social and cultural time.

One of the problems on dealing with the phenomenon of time was already addressed by the American sociologist Ogburn, who in his theory of cultural phase shift hypothesized the concept of cultural lag, the "cultural lag". This hypothesis is based on the view that in modern societies the material culture changes faster than the social order. The socio-cultural adaptation of a society to the development determined by technical progress therefore takes place with a time delay. The specialist discussion on the subject of "time" has continued to flourish since the 1970s and has become the subject of a large number of publications and conferences in recent years in connection with innovations in information and communication technology.

From a theoretical perspective, the contributions of Luhmann, who in the context of his system-theoretical considerations raises the question as to whether a theory of complex social systems logically allows a general concept of time in general, are particularly noteworthy. According to the construction logic of Luhmann's system theory, the elements of complex systems each have their own time dimensions. Luhmann introduces the term "proper time"[41]. He is particularly noteworthy in this context because he no longer relies on one of the linear-monocausal stage theories of social development, based on the idea of a linear progress with a human history goal or endpoint, but the time dimension and the problem of different social times in evolutionary perspective systematically considered[42]. Nowotny takes Luhmann's notion of "own time" in its expositions, but does not associate it with system time, but with the need of modern man "for the demarcation of" one's own time "from that which connects people to others."

In the framework of her train of thought, she deals above all with the individual, subjective experience of time. In every human being the subjective feeling of temporal duration is subject to great fluctuations. Our time experience depends on the individual and situation as well as on what is experienced, as well as on the physical and / or mental state in which we find ourselves. Mintzel points out that there is no absolute tense in individual life (as well as on the superindividual level

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[41]Luhmann, N. (1995b): Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik. Studien zur Wissenssoziologie der modernen Gesellschaft, 2 Bände, Frankfurt a.M.

[42]Lyles, M. (1992): Top management, strategy and organizational knowledge structures, in: JoMS, 29/2,

of social and cultural time). Rather, there is a large number of »My time«, which sometimes have significant discrepancies and do not have to agree with the mathematical and physical conception of time.

The individual must thus "adjust" or "compensate" his subjective time with the outer "world time." In this context, science also speaks of the paradox of subjective time[43]. The subjective perception of time is only rudimentary at birth. The adolescent has to learn to read and understand the complex symbol system of the clocks and calendars exactly in order to regulate his own feelings and behavior accordingly. From the perspective of sociology is learned, that is, the traditional time, always "social time" or "sociocultural time". The individual becomes acquainted with the temporal order of his and other groups and those of his society and culture as part of the process of socialization and enculturation into a social system.

It should be noted at this point that there is currently no consensual, universally applicable and verifiable theory of social times. Different temporal considerations are based on a multiplicity of coexisting, coexisting and mutually existing social times: on different sys- tem times, on the simultaneous presence of different "own times", on a cultural diversity of temporal concepts and on a change of time experiences and time determinations in human history, The time factor and the "time problem" are among the central determinants of human interaction in addition to the previously discussed dimension of communication.

Every social action takes place in space and time, every interaction is suitable in a temporal sequence. Time, as well as space, thus becomes the basic requirement of all social processes[44]. Which concept of time is used depends on the context in which the individual is and communicates. Time is thus a complex, relational term with many "times". Depending on culture, location, age, gender, position, occupation or activity, people live simultaneously in different social times, time rhythms and clocks. The different times are usually experienced as a matter of course, are part of the cultural orientation system.Against this background, many efforts have been made to examine culture-specific different time concepts, time rhythms and cycles in overlapping situations and to document these as cultural standards.

The culturally different way of dealing with time and the resulting consequences are on the one hand empirically relatively well researched, on the other hand, the influence of different individual or group-specific understanding of time on concrete work processes in practice is still largely given little attention[45]. This seems particularly remarkable considering that the dimension of time is reflected in a variety of ways in business organizational processes.

This is known as "Just in Time Productions", "Time and Motion Studies", Time to Market or "Time Lag", "Time Management" and "Time Sharing". Even the equivalents have become

[43]Adler, N. C.; Graham, J. (1989): Cross-Cultural Interaction: The International Comparison Fallacy? in: JIBS, 3/1989
[44]Lobel, S. (1991): Global Leadership Competencies: Managing to a Different Drumbeat, in: HRM, Vol. 29, 2/1991
[45]Adler, N. C. (1983): A Typology of Management Studies Involving Culture, in: JIBS Vol. 14, 3/1983

indispensable in everyday language use: work time recording, time chord, time wage, temporary work, time arbitration, time competition, time costs, time planning, time preference, time verification (eg material controls), time regression as extrapolation method, and time series analysis, just to name a few , fill the vocabulary of the executives[46]. Add to this the idea that products, services or processes age or mature and have a life cycle similar to that of humans. The perception of time is strongly influenced by the respective cultures, because the understanding of the temporal dimension is more like an idea than a tangible object. How we think about time is intimately related to how we plan, think, act, and coordinate our actions with others. It has a strong impact on the way we handle experiences and organize activities.The French sociologist Émile Durkheim thought that time was a social construct that would allow members of a culture to coordinate their activities[47]. As a result, different aspects of the classification and sizing of time will be compared.

Perception of time as a linear and cyclical concept

Basically, two different time experiences and time determinations can be distinguished: the cyclic and the linear. The linear time here stands for a time arrow or timeline, which leads from the past over the present into the future. It is irreversible and excludes repetitions of events that have happened. It thus corresponds to man's experience that his existence is historically conditioned and that everything is transient. Time flies, she is in the river. On the other hand, the cyclical conception is based on observations that the course of the sun, moon, and stars is regularly repeated, and the orbits of the stars form closed circles or cycles.The philosopher Heraclitus, quoted elsewhere, summarized these two apparitions with the much cited sentences: "One day is like another" or "You can not go twice into the same river. Everything is in motion, nothing remains.

"Heraclitus thus describes time as an irreversible process according to the one understanding of constant becoming and cyclic recurring of the same or linear understanding.So time can be easily structured either at sunrise and sunset, after the moon phases, or after the seasons. These are elementary subdivisions as they were common in early human history and are still preferred to linear understanding in many primitive peoples today. Time divisions with observable astronomical, geophysical and climatic phenomena have always played a major role in human history. Different cultures have made the natural cycles and rhythms to which they have been and still are ecologically variable, socio-culturally variable, and have expressed them in numerous manifestations. In this way, people have from time immemorial classified their activity in the natural regularities and thus in the social life[48].

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[46]Jandt, F. (1995): Intercultural Communication. An Introduction, Thousand Oaks.
[47]Durkheim, É. (1960): From the Social Work Division, 7 Editions.
[48]Jackson, T. (Hrsg.) (1995): Cross-Cultural Management, Oxford.

Structure and Given Orientation to the Individual

The cyclical conception of time with its important social functions is most likely older than the linear understanding of time. But that does not mean that only traditional, "old" or conservative cultures live with time cycles. Even in modern, highly complex societies, people live in cycles, such as the life cycle, the family cycle, the season cycle or the calendar, which describes a given annual cycle[49].

The linear, more complex concept of time is to be understood as a coupling of individual seconds, minutes, hours, days, months and years. It denotes a straight-line or linear sequence of quantitative units of time. The idea of a linear time course often requires a fixed starting point and a destination point. Between these two points, time "flows" and has passed forever. So time is no longer seen as a cycle in which the seconds in the minute, the minutes in the hour, the hours in the days and the days in the weeks, etc. always recur. Under a linear understanding of time, therefore, the stringent sequence of months and years is subsumed. What happened yesterday is no longer relevant to our understanding of time. Time is to be understood here as a measuring instrument, which today expresses itself among others in the form of a calendar. This concept tends to be more prevalent in modern industrial and service companies. In the cyclical conception of time, on the other hand, time is interpreted as a cycle[50].

Time can not be wasted in these cultures, nor can it "run away". She returns tomorrow, in a week, a month, etc. This cyclical view of time tends to be more in Asian cultures. It should be noted at this point that the two views of time, cyclic and linear, are not mutually exclusive; rather, they can stand side by side or in interrelation. Depending on how strongly the temporal orientation of an individual in a specific situation is pronounced, it has an effect on cultural overlapping situations and can thus decisively influence many areas of cultural coexistence and working.

The Relation between "Long-term" and "short-term orientations as well as "modernity" vs. "traditionalism"

In the course of various research efforts with East Asian connections Geert Hofstede and Michael Bond developed a culturally contrastive categorization, which is due in its origins to the Western confrontation with the Confucian teachings and can be represented with a continuum between long and short-term orientation. Bond chose the addition "Confucian" in this sizing, as almost all of the characteristics of the two poles seem to stem directly from the teachings of Confucius[51].It is noticeable, however, that the characteristics of one pole are oriented more

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[49]Duncan, R. (1974): Modification in Decision Structure in Adapting to the Environment: Some Implications For Organizational Learning, in: DeSci 5/1974

[50]Dülfer, E. (1990): Human Resource Management in Multinational and International Operating Companies, in: Pieper, R. (Hrsg.): Human Resource Management. An International Comparison. Berlin,

[51]Hofstede, G.; Bond, M.H. (1988):The Confucius Connection: From Cultural Roots to Economic Growth, in OD, 16, 4/1988

towards the future and are more dynamic (long-term orientation), that the expressions of the other pole are more focused on past and present and can be described as static (short-term orientation)[52].

According to the authors, short-term oriented cultures or societies attach great importance to respect for the face and respect for traditions. Regardless of the costs involved, respect for social obligations and status obligations is higher than for long-term societies, which see their commitments only within certain limits. From an economic point of view, a short-term orientation often results in a relatively low savings rate, which in turn forms the monetary framework for a low investment rate. While members of long-term oriented cultures are characterized by perseverance in (slowly) achieving results, the short-term orientation expects rapid results, which may, however, be short-lived.

Handy gives a concrete example in which the differences between short-term and long-term orientations are clearly visible. In 1993, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) found that the Director-General had sold his services to the BBC via his own private company.He had thus used a legally sound method, which in the world of short-term contracts the Bond calls this category as "Confucian dynamics" referring to the teaching of Confucius. It should be noted at this point that, contrary to widespread beliefs, Confucianism is not a religion, but rather a "practical ethic" that incorporates a set of pragmatic rules of daily life that Confucius saw as lessons from Chinese history. Bond refers in this context in particular to the distinction between short-term and long-term orientation.

The subject of these different orientations was later interpreted by Hofstede as the search for a society for virtue. It is no coincidence that this cultural standard category is related to the teachings of Confucius' practical ethics. This dealt with the virtue, but left open the question of the truth. Eastern religions (Buddhism, Hinduism, Shinto and Taoism) and Western religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) are separated by a deep philosophical divide. While the three occidental religions rely on the existence of an absolute truth accessible to the "true believers", in the great Eastern religions and Confucianism as a nonreligious ethic, the claim of an absolute truth that a human community can grasp is dispensed with.

From these different backgrounds diverging conceptions of truth and virtues can be understood. While Western-style logic assumes a principle of causality, long-term orientated oriental cultures forego valid truths. In other words, they have a higher ambiguity tolerance and widespread recognition of equifinalities.

In the context of short-term and long-term orientation, Thomas describes another cultural standard category, which he characterizes by the contrasting pair of traditionalism and modernity. Accordingly, cultures differ in their tendency to adhere to the past, the traditional and the traditional, or in contrast to being open to innovations and to reacting to external influences with a willingness to change. Even within nations, cultures or organizations, groups and individuals can be found that are shaped differently with the help of this cultural dimension.It is therefore

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[52]Hofstede, G. (1980): Culture´s Consequences - International Differences in Work Related Values, Beverly Hills

important for a manager to know whether the employees and colleagues in general or which groups and persons tend to be more traditional or are open to modernity values.

Categories of Time and Corresponding Culture Types

Time is a social construct that allows its members to organize all their actions. "Of all creatures, only the human being is aware of the time and tries to control it." However, the relationship to time and how to deal with it varies according to the culture. Most people think in the categories of past, present and future. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck have distinguished between three types of culture[53]:

The "present-oriented cultural type" presents itself as relatively timeless and with little appreciation of traditions. The future as such is barely perceived, and consequently plays a subordinate role in concrete decision-making processes. Present-oriented cultures are neutral to requirements and potential changes, but are oriented towards the immediate, short-term benefits of an action or change and prefer it to long-term profit expectations. These cultures or societies, for example, are characterized by the preference for present consumption over future-related savings.

The "culture of the past" cultivates traditions and sees itself as the result of previous processes. Opportunities for change are given little esteem; Changes therefore remain at a low level. The "future-oriented type of culture" is strongly tied to proactive decisions, planning-oriented management philosophies such as "Management by Objectives" (MbO) are therefore often to be found with him. In most used management by concepts. The core of the MbO is in the specification of objectives for all levels of management, or in the joint development of the objectives to be given by supervisors and their employees, with each of the action plans for the realization of the objectives are left to the responsible employees for free decision-oriented companies wins a forward-looking planning itself for small activities and micro projects and in importance.

The references to cultural-contrastive arguments was based on the fact that characteristic features along the four possible constellation patterns could be differentiated on a country-by-country basis. At this point, reference should be made to the shortcomings of Cottle's scientific discovery and the weaknesses of empirical reasoning in relation to specific countries and cultural allocations[54]. Nonetheless, the model description of different time categories and corresponding cultural types is useful for illustrating cultural difference.

On the basis of this universal category system and the previously discussed manifestations of the factor time in culturally different contexts, culturally determined divergent conceptions of time and implications can be juxtaposed and categorized. However, there are always individual differences in time perception and attitudes towards time, as well as the fact that behaviors referring to these dimensions are always to be seen within the framework of a situational

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[53]Kluckhohn, C. (1962) (Hrsg.): Culture and Behavior: Collected Essays of Clyde Kluckhohn, New York.
[54]Smith, P.B.; Peterson, M.;Wang, Z. (1996b): The Manager as Mediator of Alternative Meanings: A Pilot Study from China, the UK and the USA, in: JIBS, Vol. 27, 1/1996.

approach, which in turn means that behaviors can only take place in the concrete, situation-dependent Context can be meaningfully interpreted[55].

It should also be noted at this point that current cultural standard research is still in its infancy in dealing with the complex dimension of time. There is still a lack of studies that provide reliable information on how to understand and classify different sociocultural perspectives and different modalities of the time and how these can be transferred to intercultural overlapping situations. In his remarks, Schmied gives a total of seven dimensions of sociocultural time, which have so far only been taken up in a rudimentary fashion by cultural standard research[56].

For example, the extension of cultural standard categories would be desirable in terms of the dimensions of time horizons and spaces, the cultural accentuation of time orientations, the different time direction, the time or continuity of time, the quality of time or the different duration of events. Especially from the latter dimensions would surely be important conclusions on cultural misinterpretations, potential sources of danger and causal descriptions of "critical incidents".Therefore, one has to distance oneself from conclusions such as: "The" Frenchman "or" the "Japanese sees the temporal dimension as follows (...)." Independently of national affiliation, time can be perceived individually as described in detail and be interpreted. Only tendentious patterns need to be recognized and described at the national level.

Conclusions

Many multinational companies are faced with the problem that executives represent strongly divergent views about the prevailing style of work and organizational style. The difficulty, as in almost all other cultural standard categories, lies not in the fact that the different views are not perceived. Usually they are even perceived as responsible for the failure of projects or contracts in a next step. Rather, the problem lies in the fact that a strong evaluation of the respective opposing, "foreign" working styles and organizational styles takes place. Own, culturally practiced behaviors and procedures are judged to be the most effective and most efficient approach to the respective goal, and the patterns that contradict them are judged to be negative, inefficient and refractory.The opportunity inherent in differences to learn or to approach problematic situations in a synergetic way is rarely perceived by managers and decision-makers. The presentation of cultural differences and a possible classification into different categories can serve the perception of a first classification and thus a possible changed view of the contrary positions.

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[55]Stening, B. (1979): Problems in cross-cultural contact: a literature review, IJIR, 3.
[56]Stening, B. (1979): Problems in cross-cultural contact: a literature review, IJIR, 3.

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