

“Culture strikes back!” Some reasons for the persistence and increasing importance of local cultures in times of globalisation

Dear Reader,

Since the beginning of JEEMS, regional Central and East European cultures have been in the very centre of a lot of articles and explanations on CEE management. But from the perception of a uniform “Eastern bloc” to theoretical figures of an “East European Capitalism”, theoretical conceptualisation of management developments have mainly pointed at similarities of CEE countries and management in contrast to Western European cultures. Despite of some articles with a stronger focus on a local national culture explanation or on differences between CEE countries, the current discussion on the impact of internationalisation and globalisation on CEE countries and management is again highlighting situational forces leading to more similar developments in CEE countries. But at the same time, even internationalisation and globalisation have been strengthening the local forces and its impact on management. National and regional cultures, values and practices, not only seem to counter the influence of global forces but also seem to be responsible for differences in adaptation of external forces, learning processes, and the identity construction leading to a new order of institutional settings within the CEE countries.

The articles of the new issue of JEEMS are clearly showing the importance of these national, regional or local forces, cultures, values or behavioral standards for decision making and management even in times of ongoing internationalisation and globalization while having a certain focus on marketing issues. The first article, by *Heather Skinner, Krzysztof Kubacki, Gloria Moss* and *David Chelly*, deals with culture, identity, and self-concept, presenting empirical results that show the diversity of these concepts within the new EU member states Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. Their study indicates large cultural differences between those countries that have to be taken into account by policy-makers as well as international marketers. The authors are pointing to the important fact that the same cultural elements have different significance in their national identities.

The second article, by *Agnes Borgulya* and *Judit Hahn*, is devoted to a comparison of work related values and attitudes in Central and Eastern Europe. The authors use findings of the European Values Study and compare data from fourteen CEE countries showing that, in terms of work-related values, no homogenous Eastern European cluster can be found. They identify some similarities but also remarkable differences regarding work-related preferences. Central and Eastern Europeans seem to give (top) priority to high salaries and wages, job security, pleasant colleagues and an interesting job. It can be

discussed whether these value preferences are also a result of similar experiences of the transformation, and that in the present, partly advanced state of transforming activities, national cultures and identities will more and more come forth.

Beyond the articles, the current research notes do also pay attention to the importance of cultural, ethical or behavioral issues of globalisation. *Jon Henrich Hanf* and *Vera Belaya* are looking at the impact of retail internationalisation on the Russian agri – food business. Trends like global sourcing or retail branding do affect the local markets leading not only to structural changes. The research of *Colin C. Williams* is focussing on illegitimate wage practices like “envelope wages” in Eastern Europe, based on an extensive survey involving 10,671 face-to-face interviews in eleven post-socialist societies.

While the research notes seem to show a stronger external impact of the globalisation forces, the articles give raise to local counter forces that differentiate and re-work the external pressure. It might be interesting to follow the latter approaches also with respect to the development in different branches or with respect to ethical or unethical practices.

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