

NATIONAL CULTURE AND APPLICATION OF TELEWORK IN EUROPE

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with cultural differences in states around Europe. People represent key resources of the companies where flexi forms are necessary way how to reach goals. Hofstede's Cultural Dimension Theory can find many answers. Application of new culture and flexi forms may improve work organization, working time and family life of employees. This paper utilizes survey data obtained from Hofstede Institute research fields and Eurostat database. Set hypotheses are supported by six auxiliary questions what help reach conclusions, how integration slowly cancelled national differences between nations.

KEY WORDS

telework, telecommuting, national culture, flexibility, dimensions

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1 INTRODUCTION

Twenty-first century started the examination of the trends for a number of Management Theories. The organization is understood as a living entity, the focus is on the selection and formation of staff. In the foreground is to focus on needs and achieve common goals. Adaptation, teams, groups and flexible organizational culture will bring successful company.

Employers primarily try to increase work efficiency and to ensure the continuous operation

of the business. Some employment flexibility can be potential for increasing employment in terms of "redistribution of work" for a larger number of workers (van Lomwel and van Ours, 2003).

The term flexibility should be more understood as an adaptation to sudden changes in the situation that has arisen with the purpose to extract something thriving and efficient for individuals and organizational culture. In a

similar way, Ailenei and Bunea characterize the labour market flexibility. Basis of the law can absorb information flows, changes, mistakes and try to turn them into activities (Ailenei and Bunea, 2010).

The objective of employment flexibility should harmonize needs of the employees and the employers. Flexibility gives employees options to create individual work plan and increase their work efficiency. The implementation of flexibility may not be caused by the demands of business. Flexibility is often initiated by the employees themselves, which can lead to personal reasons, such as the obligation to care for family members, home care, study or other activities which prevent them from performing work full time (Rodgers, 2006).

Telework recorded the highest growth in recent years. Increasing numbers of teleworkers

are not exclusively the result of the employers needs to adjust to the market requirements, but it occurs due to the higher availability of ICT products and faster Internet connection. Various sources reported in different countries, different number of employees working in the form of telework. Authors sometimes counted only formal full-time teleworkers, Contract Teleworkers or Once Week Teleworkers, in the Western Europe are known as the “Home Office”. Teleworkers have a standard contract of employment in the organization for eight hours daily, but getting the opportunity to work from home a flexible number of days. This number is nowhere precisely defined as formal terms of the oral agreement between employers and employees. Walinskas states that contract teleworkers, employee teleworkers or “Home Office” in the world have over one billion employees (Walinskas, 2015).

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Telework (Telecommuting)

The definition of telework in the European Framework Agreement is kept deliberately broad. Article 2 of the European Framework Agreement on Telework of 2002 stipulates that: “Telework is a form of organizing and/or performing work, using formation technology, in the context of an employment contract/relationship, where work, which could also be performed at the employer’s premises, is carried out away from those premises on a regular basis” (Eurofound, 2002). While this definition allows for wider agreement on the definition in the European Member States, the lack of a clear and ambiguous definition presents a problem for measuring and comparing the incidence of telework across countries. A slight deviation from the definition in the agreement appears in the EWCS (European Working Conditions Surveys) that measures only telework “from home”, while the European Framework Agreement covers workplaces away from the employer’s premises other than home as well. This deviation, however, can be

considered negligible, since the evidence from other national and sectoral statistics show that “home” is a work site for the large majority of teleworkers. Since telework is relatively new, the majority of countries have just started gathering statistics on telework, therefore, the national data do not yet have a solid ground (Baltina, 2012).

The term “telework” (telecommuting in the US) was coined by Jack Nilles in 1973. It widely spread primarily at the beginning of the 21st century. Its growth was not prompted exclusively due to the companies reactions to the market needs, but also thanks to the fact that ICT products turned to be less financially demanding and the fast Internet coverage spread. At present, based on the Reuters data every fifth employee in the world works in the telework mode at least a part of working week (Reaney, 2012).

2.2 Categorization of Telework

To interpret the data provided by surveys more reliably, the most commonly used categoriza-

tion of telework forms must be introduced. It can be categorized by the place of performance as part of localization flexibility, as follows (Wojčák and Poláková, 2014): (a) *Home Office* – represents the form in which the employee works at home utilizing ICT. (b) *Satellite Centre* – is the form in which employee works in a centre established by the employer outside the employer's premises, e.g. at the client's place. IT programmers or database administrators are the occupations working typically in this mode. (c) *Street Work* – is the form in which the employee works at a public place, e.g. in a café or at means of transport. This form has been implemented just recently due to the accessibility of the Internet and new developments of mobile devices.

2.3 Telework Application

To answer the question of teleworking application, is necessary have to highlight their major advantages and disadvantages. The most serious problem with teleworkers is social isolation from the team of co-workers as agreed by a number of authors (Cooper and Kurland, 2002; Vega, 2003; Gajerndran and Harrison, 2007; Golden et al., 2008; Pyöriä, 2011). Problem is vented by the American Psychological Association and coincides with the results of research in the recent ten years presented at conferences and published in a monograph.

In understanding of communication solutions that result in the embedded telework, as we have in the case of communication: email, conferencing, video calls, as a variety of cottages: *Hangouts, Whatsapp, Facebook, Skype*, but they are not completely substitute for standard communication. A serious problem is usually the lack of understanding of organizational culture, or in an amendment notice to change staff behaviour (Thatcher and Bagger, 2011; Bullock et al., 2015).

Isolation results from the fact that teleworker is not during working hours in personal contact with co-workers. Personal communication face to face is preferred and also due to non-

verbal communication. Another disadvantage of teleworking is awareness. Teleworkers may not have much correct information about what is happening in the organization (Wojčák, 2013).

2.4 National Culture and Hofstede's Dimensions

National culture is a set of creeds, values and standards that share a given social group, and that decisively influences the behaviour of members. This file has been building for a long time based on the collective experience to meet challenges that the group has faced and is facing, and therefore serves as a valid new members (Šajgalíková and Bajžíková, 2013). It is obvious that the organization itself is a culture for nations that develops, changes and reacts to changes (Denison, 1996; Schein, 2004).

Organizational culture is a small part it develops set of creeds, norms and formal customs on lower level what create nations and national identity over Europe. If culture is not shared with others in the group may occur misinterpretation which can lead to a gradual decline in the ability to navigate the organization and understand the reasons why they were ever made (Becker and Gerhart, 1996; Patti et al., 2004). This may result in that, teleworkers intrinsic job satisfaction often leads eventually to demotivation, because feedback can be often negative (Copuš, 2015).

In terms of dimension impact on national culture according to telework, is necessary to define what these dimensions are. One of his most notable accomplishments is the establishment of the Cultural Dimensions Theory, which provides a systematic framework for assessing the differences between nations and cultures. The theory is based on the idea that value can be placed upon six cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede et al., 2010). Dimensions are Power Distance Index (PDI), Individualism (IDV), Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI), Masculinity (MAS), Long Term Orientation (LTO) and Indulgence versus Restraint (ING).

High PDI – Low PDI

System is desirable and reflects the inequality gap among workers. Senior managers are mentors, those know answers. The high degree of symbolism, centralization and accepted response is social inequality, using the formal means of communication. Decentralisation is a typical sign of progress change (Adler and Gundersen, 2008).

High IDV – Low IDV

The degree to which people prefer to act as individuals rather than as members of groups. For individual expression is characterized by creativity a certain degree of futuristic thinking “say what they think is the basis for discussions”. Collectivist culture relies on the power of the masses, where decision making is in the form of “We”. Independence and autonomy in private life and in the workplace, form of thinking “I” (Triandis, 2002).

High UAI – Low UAI

Cultures that score high on this index are less tolerant of change and tend to minimize the anxiety of the unknown by implementing rigid rules, regulations, or laws. Time is money, strict rules are just top of the hill in very closed and conservative company culture (Hofstede et al., 2010).

High MAS – Low MAS

Cultures that are high on the masculinity scale generally have more prominent differences between genders to be more competitive and ambitious. Femininity stands for a society in which social gender roles overlap (Smith et al., 2008).

*High LTO (Long Term) –
Low LTO (Short Term)*

It is therefore on adapting the concepts and innovation for the future. Slow recovery and persistence points to respect commitments have been made through the Social Fund and the socially binding. Low investments that have high returns expected results (Hofstede et al., 2010).

*High Indulgence (51–100) –
High Restraint (0–50)*

Low stress rate, enjoying life, low emotional and feelings control, close relationships, where life is not too serious. In the first place is satisfaction, spending money for pleasure and fun. Pessimistic attitude with strict rules, negative and bad feelings is typical mark for restraint (Hofstede et al., 2010).

3 SURVEY OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY

The main purpose of our research was to examine the reasons a the reasons for differences in the application of Telework within the EU countries between Hofstede’s Dimensions of national culture and telework. We looked answers for basic research questions: *Does the diversity of national cultures influence extent of Telework contracts? What cause higher level of teleworking in countries?* We investigated relationship based on Eurostat data for 29 EU countries and their values belonging to different dimensions of Hofstede. The core data of telework used in the survey are reports on EUROSTAT, Hofstede Institute website, doc-

uments and guidelines of the European Union that were used in research, Excel calculations and finally interpreted in results.

To analyze methodological background was used logical induction, descriptive statistics synthesis and deduction in developing results and drawing conclusions. To determine dependence research was Pearson correlation coefficient calculated in Excel software. Panel regression was rejected for insufficient time data. Results are interpreted in graphic and narrative form and differences are discussed. The identity of the States in the creation of figures were used country code by ISO 3166-1

Tab. 1: Hofstede’s dimension and percentage of teleworkers in European countries

Country	Country code	PDI	IDV	MAS	UAI	LTO	ING	Telework	Member
Austria	AT	11	55	79	70	60	63	10.8%	EU, EUZ
Belgium	BE	65	75	54	94	82	57	9.1%	EU, EUZ
Bulgaria	BG	70	30	40	85	69	16	0.5%	EU
Croatia	HR	73	33	40	80	58	33	1.1%	EU
Czech Republic	CZ	57	58	57	74	70	29	4.1%	EU
Denmark	DK	18	74	16	23	35	70	11.2%	EU
Estonia	EE	40	60	30	60	82	16	6.2%	EU, EUZ
Finland	FI	33	63	26	59	38	57	12.7%	EU, EUZ
France	FR	68	71	43	86	63	48	7.5%	EU, EUZ
Germany	DE	35	67	66	65	83	40	4.8%	EU, EUZ
United Kingdom	UK	35	71	43	86	63	48	3.8%	EU
Greece	GR	60	35	57	100	45	50	2.3%	EU, EUZ
Hungary	HU	46	80	88	82	58	31	3.9%	EU
Iceland	IS	30	60	10	50	28	67	7.8%	NON EU
Ireland	IE	28	70	68	35	24	65	2.3%	EU, EUZ
Latvia	LV	44	70	9	63	69	13	2.3%	EU, EUZ
Lithuania	LT	42	60	30	60	82	16	4.1%	EU, EUZ
Luxembourg	LU	40	60	50	70	64	56	12.7%	EU, EUZ
Malta	MT	56	59	47	96	47	66	2.1%	EU, EUZ
Netherlands	NL	38	80	14	53	67	68	13.9%	EU, EUZ
Norway	NO	31	69	8	50	35	55	5.3%	NON EU
Poland	PL	68	60	64	93	38	29	4.1%	EU
Portugal	PT	63	27	31	99	28	33	7.1%	EU, EUZ
Romania	RO	90	30	42	90	52	20	0.3%	EU
Slovakia	SK	100	52	94	51	77	28	3.7%	EU, EUZ
Slovenia	SI	71	27	19	88	49	48	7.4%	EU, EUZ
Spain	ES	57	51	42	86	48	44	4.3%	EU, EUZ
Sweden	SE	31	71	5	29	53	78	5.6%	EU
Switzerland	CH	34	68	70	58	74	66	4.8%	NON EU

Source: Hofstede (2017), Eurostat (2016).

Alpha 2. For Hofstede’s Dimensions was used the following abbreviations – Power Distance Index (PDI), Individualism (IDV), Masculinity (MAS), *Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)*, Long Term Orientation (LTO), Indulgence (ING).

H₁: Diversity of national cultures influence extent of Telework contracts.

H₂: What cause higher level of teleworking in countries.

For better results draw is necessary to set 6 questions: Exist significant correlation between the percentage and number of teleworkers rate for PDI, IDV, MAS, UAI, LTO, ING?

4 RESULTS

4.1 Correlation Coefficient Results

To determinate the existence of dependence between the application of teleworking and hosted dimensions was used Pearson's correlation coefficient calculated in Excel software. Research tried to find out answer on six auxiliary questions about national dimensions. Results of the investigation are shown in Tab. 2. Results show measurement dependency between Teleworkers (%) and selected dimensions. Highlighted rows point to significant dependence.

Tab. 2: Correlation coefficient between the percentage and number of teleworkers & Hofstede's dimensions

	Correlation coeff.
Teleworkers % / PDI	-0.489
Teleworkers % / IDV	0.011
Teleworkers % / MAS	0.343
Teleworkers % / UAI	-0.012
Teleworkers % / LTO	0.016
Teleworkers % / ING	-0.118

There are answers on two added questions, if exist significant correlation between percentage and number of teleworkers rate. Tab. 2 shows that major dimensions are PDI and MAS other low correlation coefficient or common dependence has not been demonstrated. Pearson's correlation coefficient calculated in Excel software.

The results of the analysis has dependence correlation coefficient -0.489 at PDI. This is a negative correlation coefficient of which shows that countries with low distance of power have a greater number of teleworkers. This indicates that, if the rate of power within the national culture is higher, telework applications contrary to a lower degree. In Fig. 1 is also seen declining representation in increasing PDI.

The correlation coefficient of 0.343 indicates the middle statistical dependence between the number of teleworkers and masculinity. This coefficient is positive, and concludes that states with higher rates of masculinity telework more frequently applied.

This indicates that, if the rate of masculinity within the national culture is higher, telework applications contrary to a higher degree. In Fig. 2 is also seen direct growth representation in increasing masculinity. Pearson correlation coefficient calculated in Excel software.

In the Fig. 1, for PDI is the result of an exponential equation as best describing the application of telework: Y represents number of teleworkers (%) and X represents value of Hofstede's PDI. In the Fig. 2, for MAS is the result of an linear equation as best describing the application of telework: Y represents number of teleworkers (%) and X represents value of Hofstede's MAS.

4.2 Results by European Integrity

Tab. 3 shows the average values for European regions set in Tab. 1. The rate of telework contracts is influenced by PDI and MAS. The established hypotheses and the auxiliary questions were answered and interpreted in the results. There is a new look that points to national cultural differences that have a direct impact on the application of flexi forms and telework application. Therefore, an alternative hypothesis, as an integration rate, can influence and change national cultures. Tab. 3 shows a different average rate of PDI and MAS. It is clear from the table that the WE have significantly more favourable values for the telework application, which is also largely confirmed. Eastern Europe does not contain complete data, it is missing from the number of Balkan states and non-EU states (Belarus and Ukraine) where there is not expected a significant rate of teleworking and influencing the results. On an alternative hypothesis, it can be said from the results that the integrity rate helps to reduce the difference between the West and the East in Europe.

Western Europe (WE) outside Soviet influence have a significantly lower average PDI, which, according to sources, shows a higher degree of flexibility and positioning for telework. West – old Member States have a lower level of PDI, which provides scope for informal

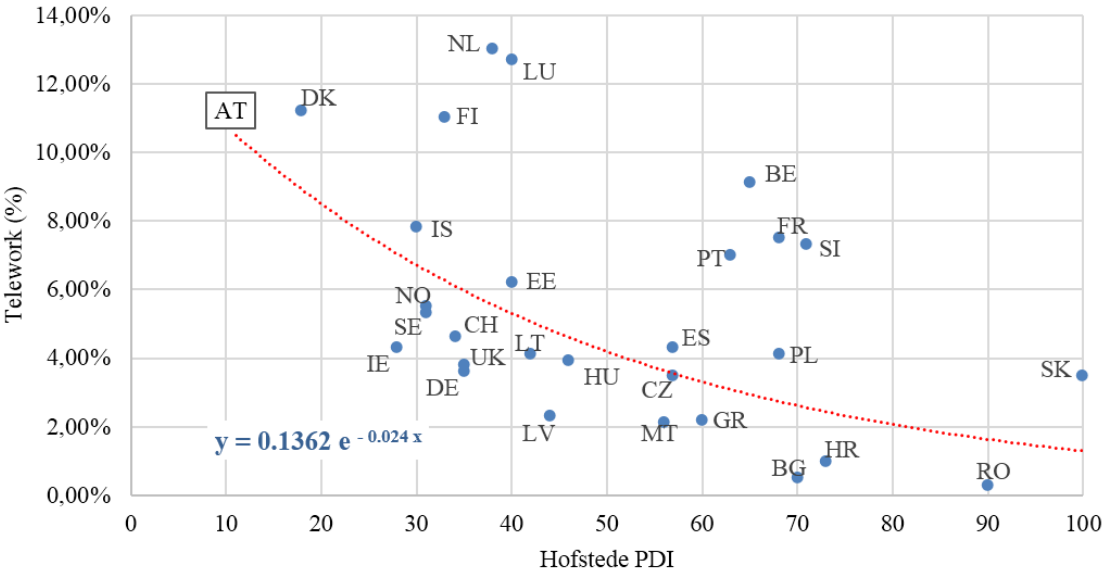


Fig. 1: Illustration of the application of teleworking (percentage of teleworkers per capita) in each country, depending on PDI (0–100)

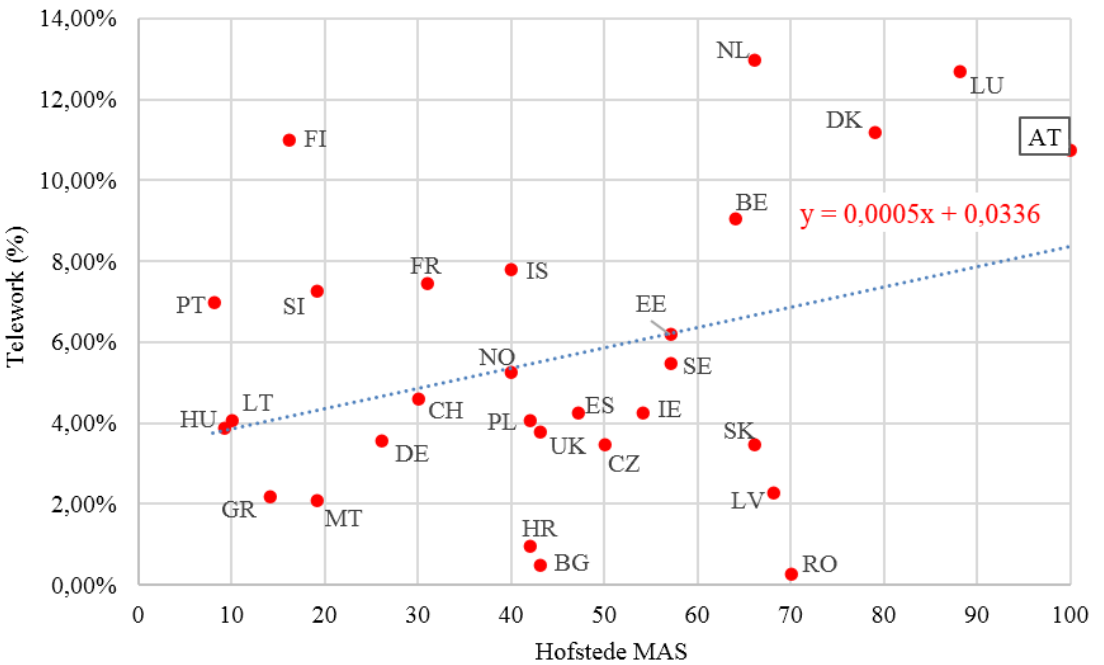


Fig. 2: Illustration of the application of teleworking (percentage of teleworkers per capita) in each country, depending on MAS (0–100)

management and achievement of goals. Similarities are visible in PDI measurement, MAS has dependency on local culture by nations and help realize employees needs.

The post-communist (CEECs) countries have a high level of PDI, but the MAS rate is more pronounced than that of regions and cultures in the region. There is still a measure of the

division of man and woman, technological and social progress in telework. The Baltic countries are more geared towards femininity, which is typical of MAS in the Nordic countries and in the Benelux countries.

Tab. 3: Average values by regions in Europe (PDI, MAS, Average percentage of Teleworkers)

	PDI	MAS	AVERAGE
WE	42.53	47.46	7.21%
CEECs	63.72	43.27	3.34%
NON EU	31.66	36.66	5.90%
EU	51.50	45.69	5.57%
EUROZONE	50.05	44.29	6.53%

Non-EU countries are based on Anglo-Saxon system is based on low PDI, emphasizes results where forgiveness can be forgiven, culture tolerates sex of balance, and is at the forefront of telework. Countries are only 3, which can distort results but definitely these countries are one of the most developed.

Eurozone average values are great mix of Western and Eastern countries integrated into currency union. Eurozone values show how may

be cultural differences in selected countries reduced.

From these final results are acceptable hypothesis H_1 and H_2 . *Diversity of national cultures influence extent of Telework contracts.* Cultural dimensions influence the level of telework, resulting from research, confirming the hypothesis and pointing to differences in EU countries. The most significant are PDI and MAS. For the hypothesis H_2 : What is the result of the very different value of Hofstede's measurements – PDI and MAS, which has proven to be a dependency in research.

For the H_2 , *What cause higher level of teleworking in countries*, hypothesis, an answer is also according to Tab. 3. The EU integration rate helps countries from other European countries to reduce cultural differences. If we compare statistical mean in WE a CEECS, there are visible differences among regions, countries. National culture definitely influences application of telework contracts in countries. Different values are clear proof of different attitudes, understanding and customs how culture is interpreted.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this paper, results show the interaction MAS and PDI when examining the dependence of the number of teleworkers. States with higher PDI have the lowest percentage of teleworkers, but it is the states with higher rate of MAS. Lower MAS is turning into femininity, where a higher correlation to the application of teleworking with femininity on quality of life. Because of the missing time horizon databases and the differences in the definitions of telework, it is very difficult to determine the salary entry data in the countries for the telework area. The absence of these data has momentarily prevented relevant research in statistical methods and using panel regression. Using induction, deduction can reveal that the height of average wage has dependence on flexible forms, but it is goal for another researches.

For the PDI and MAS dimensions, the difference in culture in Europe is considerable. In this

case, it is necessary to divide the countries into five world parties and describe each. Likewise, the Iron Curtain remains, where the countries in the East developed in a different cultural environment than the Western Lands, which still divides Europe into two blocks.

The degree of dependence between PDI and the number of teleworkers has a correlation coefficient of 0.489 which is the upper limit. A higher rate frame sizes PDI represents such an organization in which it is difficult to have more equal relationship with a higher position in the organization.

The degree of dependence between the MAS and the number of workers has body correlation coefficient 0.343 that states with higher rates of masculinity slightly more frequently used teleworkers. For this mild dependence, masculinity is the perception of the organization, focusing on profit, to reduce costs, the competitiveness

among colleagues, the competitiveness that the organization moves forward.

Telework as a solution to social problems with transport, environment and opportunity for people to better organize their personal and professional life, the possibility of increasing knowledge, education, increasing independence and the consequent increase creativity and the possibility of a genuine contribution to the organization. It therefore appears that differences between cultures have significant similarities. Most Theories of Motivation are focused on content, process and on individual needs, goals and consequences. Intercultural research suggests that universal acceptance of these theories is problematic. There is no flexible “manual” how to adjust culture in companies over the world. Further formal relations in organizations

must be changed. Successful companies have to melt barriers between positions and reduce PDI level over all positions. Managers head new challenges, in future they have to find out new ways how to apply those skills, innovate processes and motivate employees for another needs.

Informal attitudes contribute to open workplaces where the provision of flexible forms will help increase innovation and satisfaction, when employees will feel that they are makers of the organizational culture. Management needs to continuously edit the new knowledge and apply it in the field. These approaches are only poorly developed all over Eastern Europe mostly. The future will show how managers can deal with changes in the needs of employees, prevent fluctuations of the best people and reach goals.

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