

PRODUCTIVITY AND WORK CULTURE IN SOUTHERN EUROPE

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2014, SOCIAL EUROPE DAYS

BRUXELLS

April, 21-25th

(This contribution will take place April, 24th)

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Abstract

Sociology suggested –from Max Weber’s contribution- the existence of differences between north and south in terms of the valuation of work as a cultural value, presenting northern countries more consistency in this aspect. Consequently, this paper aims to compare a group of classic Northern European countries (Germany, Sweden, Netherlands and Finland) with other southern countries: (Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece; recently called PIGS) -and both groups with EU-27-, focusing the strength of the work as a cultural value and its potential impact on productivity levels. For such purpose, this will use different variables analyzed by the European Work Conditions Survey (EWCS 2010): working speed, orientation to deadlines, dependency on targets and work time; then I’ll test if these can predict productivity levels of countries. As a result, the group of northern countries appears above the EU average in the first three indicators analyzed and South is above in work time although, as can be seen, with lower productivity.

Keywords: national cultures, European crisis, European Union, southern European economies, PIGS.

Introduction

With the development of political, economic and social project that represents the European Union , the historical heterogeneity of Europe is further evidenced in recent times. Certainly , from the outside , Europe is seen as more than a continent , it is a united by history, the territory that was nuclear in pregnancy in Western society , leading to Eurocentrism as a political , cultural and economic phenomenon . However, this model has gradually declined both the emergence of the United States from the early twentieth century , such as the Asia in the past three decades (Lamo de Espinosa 2010). To what extent this heterogeneity has been damaged this? Although it is difficult to answer, this paper seeks to address some clues. Among the notable economic and cultural differences existing in Europe intend to highlight those between north and south. This distinction coexists with other political and social issues in Europe (east-west or community against non-EU countries) which do not significantly affect the subject of this study. In general terms we can note that the economic differences between northern countries and southern Europe has a relatively short tradition , as countries like Spain , Portugal and Italy maintained their historical importance during the colonial era , plus the first two nations kept their period of splendor in the age of Discovery and mercantilism . Subsequently, the Industrial Revolution was presented as a key step that would change the tide in favor of the north.

More recently Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece (countries focalizarán this study) have joined the European Union in terms of delay notorious about their northern partners. However, the strength of Italy in the 80 -

equaling in some moments of the decade GDP per capita in the United Kingdom , and the major economic expansion of Spain in the 90s and early 2000 , did think that the European dream of establishing a balance north-south was something tangible. However, the fall experienced by Italy and Spain since the crash of Lehman Brothers in 2008 , invited to think of a good economic growth dependent , betraying their lack of innovation , technology, industrialization and , therefore , in job creation (anonymised , 2012). Portugal and Greece have also experienced the beginning of the 2000s a gradual worsening of their economies being the particularly serious situation in the Greek case for its debt and its consequent threat to the stability of the Euro.

Also, once expressed the difficulty of financing the south and its inability to generate short-term growth, northern partners denounce what they consider a waste of their community financial contributions. Have you created the Southern culture of the grant, supplied by both self-government and by the community? Grants to Regions Preferred one - with a clear mission - balancing have resulted , according to De la Fuente (2005) , in a positive and fictional effect , passenger has vanished when the contributions have been reduced over time. For other , more pessimistic , the EU grants to disadvantaged regions have barely managed to avoid that north-south structural differences always be reduced . Employment , innovation, business and technological fabric (González Rodríguez et al, 2000).

About the job performance of the countries of southern Europe , economic data corroborate some of their grievances against the north. Productivity per hour worked (Eurostat , 2012) the average of the EU - 27, Portugal and Greece, with 100 being presented alarming figures (65.4 and 76.3 , respectively) , while Italy and Spain are close to the average (101.5 and 107.9) . They are far from neighbors to the north as the Netherlands (136.5) and Germany (123.7) . On this issue to pronounce a report published by the McKinsey Global Institute (MGI) in 2010, assigning 100 points to the current level of productivity in the United States, located north of Europe in a discreet 84 countries and southern Europe an alarming 73 . The report concludes that while the 90 European productivity is much approached the level of the U.S. , from 2000 continues in its decline , particularly spurred by the South , which have entered a " not sustainable line." Both these statistics as evidence the high deficit of the South have spurred its partners in the European Union , under the leadership of German - loaded inks with their governments and their economic performance. Although it is difficult to collect these allegations in a few sentences , we stress the tendency to waste, patronage, administrative deficiencies , overloading of the public administration and, above all , productivity problems . Lamo de Espinosa to pronounce so thinking about the Spanish case (2010: 543) " This has raised serious doubts about the strength and potential of the Spanish economy , and to a lesser extent, the resilience of its institutions and political elites . The international financial press has condemned Spain to the company of pigs (" PIGS " : Portugal, Italy, Greece , Spain), and this stigma takes time to forget "

In turn, these elements can be considered a result of different cultural processes that occur in a Southern way of life that all of the above conditions . This is the local work culture , varying very difficult to decouple or separate the own lifestyle . Also , discrepancies between the nations of the north and south by the imbalances that cause these last countries in the European accounts substrate arguments lead to very old , with Weber's essence : a Northern Protestant ethic , solid work culture and demonstrated its ability to develop capitalism and approach the model of the welfare state ; against a Catholic south , familistic ,

patronage and unproductive (Paugam , 2008; Simmel [1907] 1998). In fact , the very Edward Banfield (1958) in his description of amoral familism sets us the particular location of the phenomenon in Italy where the moral obligations focus on the family and vanish outside. In short, " sin " out of home to benefit the family itself causes a sympathetic and condescending judgment on the subject's environment , and this is set as a phenomenon crystallized in this cultural sphere , as subsequently corroborated Pizzorno (1966) or expanding the Spanish case, López Pintor and Wert (1982).

Influence of Weber's sociology

The primary role in the history of industrial society have national cultures in the future of their organizations has led me to give special treatment to this relationship. Among the considerations on the influence of origin and nationality on the work culture is inescapable highlight the turning point that led to the contribution by Weber in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* ([1904] 1981). In this landmark work, the author points out , within the cultural dimensions that affect the economy and labor, the determining role of religion , based on the rapid adaptation of the capitalist -industrial system in Protestant countries . The Lutheran doctrine places the work in the axis of the fulfillment of the Christian, as well as their essential contribution to the community. The work us towards our neighbors and , therefore , into the sky. Therefore, early capitalism development in those nations where found its breeding ground : Protestantism. The beliefs of a people determine their goals and values and norms that mediate to achieve them. In the words of Weber himself ([1904] 1981:47): "This type of entrepreneur , the" capitalist adventurer " has existed worldwide . His odds were always irrational and speculative ; or were based on the acquisition by violent means , and the spoil was made in the war at a particular time or continuous and fiscal despoliation exploiting the subjects. (...) However, in the West , capitalism has a significance, and characteristic forms and addresses are not known elsewhere "Subsequently, Santayana (2011 [1905] : 43). Emphasizes economic and social determinism religion : " that every living and healthy religion has a marked idiosyncrasy. His power is a special and surprising message and guidance that revelation gives to life. Scenarios that opens and the mysteries are proposing another world in which to live . "In this line , Simmel (1998 [1907]) in his analysis of the behavior of the southern economies , development problems linked to the Catholic practice.

The application of culture to the world of work and organizations has a short tradition , receiving a significant boost from the 80s . The background of the new aspect of study must go back to the contributions of the School of Human Relations from the 20s of last century, when Elton Mayo and his colleagues conducted a major survey for further theoretical developments , emphasizing aspects of organizational reality hitherto forgotten such as the identification of the worker with the collective goals of the organization , participation and emotional attachment to the working group and, ultimately , the discovery of the importance of the work environment and the organization Informal (Brunet , Belzunegui and Pastor 2011). More recent stream of interest extend to understanding the circumstances of organizations submitting especially problematic frames. Area in which we highlight the studies of Goffman (1970) , who analyzed psychiatric hospitals and Garfinkel (1967), which took as a study center for suicide prevention . In both cases the importance of the distinction between the cultural characteristics of different groups that determine their interaction in a wider cultural system is highlighted. From the decade of the 80 significantly increased the interest in national culture, especially by the international diffusion reached by the works of William Ouchi (1981, 1984), which

impinge on the important role of culture in the Japanese work success some of its companies (Lucas García and Ruiz, 2002).

Moreover, Manuel Castells (1997 : 242) has highlighted the impact each has on local culture forms of organization to which it gives rise. Among these , the dominant organizational forms and cultures that created them extend to other environments and impose their ways of doing , a phenomenon that , in turn , intensified by globalization. In the author's words : "Every society tends to generate its own organizational arrangements . The more a society is distinct for its history, more evolved in isolation from other societies and are more specific forms of organization . However, when the broad scope of economic activity and enterprise systems when interacting global technology, organizational forms diffuse , taking features from each other and create a mix that responds to patterns of production and competition largely common , while adapting to specific social environments in which they operate. "

Sociocultural perspective and rise of strong cultures

Since then, the development paradigm of the culture of work and organizations has generated three major perspectives: institutional or leaders (entities seen as a reflection of its creators : (Schein, [1985] 1988), the interpretive (enterprises as networks of subcultures that reflect , in turn , processes external to the organization socialization (Berger and Luckman , [1968] 2004, Burack 1991 or Reygadas , 2002) and sociocultural in which this research is based . this sociocultural approach part of the consideration that the members of an organization are both citizens of their countries and regions , so that local cultural patterns explain much of his behavior at work , to their colleagues and to the whole society . interest shown by this approach comes from the multinational nature with most large organizations. Logically, the origin of the company and its country of origin will shape the philosophy and guidelines of organizational performance that export its culture to the world . However, most people working in subsidiaries of multinationals are local and , although logically might think that these natives are the ones who should adapt to the owner's capital of culture , the reality of organizational experiences not indicates this. In this area highlights case studies by Hofstede in the 80s. They highlight the different adaptation of the multinational IBM worldwide through its subsidiaries. The author highlighted the importance for organizations has read the local work culture for efficient management that allows you to consolidate in such an environment. The history of multinationals is full of failures caused by poor or non-existent cultural adaptation of the policies . Subsequent investigations carried out to analyze the interactions between the local and organizational culture - in the line - Hofstede scores suggest that local pop culture can ignore and even alter the rules and goals that the organization pursues , as studies pose Reygadas (2002) on the textile industry in Central America or the anonymised (2007) on multinational Maersk .

Halfway through the 80's momentum took a major line in the literature on work and organizations suggested that imposing strong cultures and traveling to weak markets . For Peters and Waterman (1994) organizations with strong cultures were more likely to succeed than those that are not located on this profile . Deal and Kennedy (1982) argue that successful organizations have - excellent - called consistent and vigorous cultures that attract , retain and reward their staff to change the role performance and loyalty. Schein (1988 [1985]) also stresses leadership in the global system of strong cultures , a fact corroborated

by the Japanese success. These organizations play a vital role the leaders and founders, responsible for its creation , development and control. Coller and Garvía (2004) emphasize that the strong culture paves the way towards excellence that reinforces the commitment of staff to the collective project, their agreement and consensus. In short, the gestation of strong cultures just associating excellence and the business and economic success, as have highlighted Garmendia (1994), Gómez Cabranes (1994) or Fernandez Enguita (2002) .

The prospect of national culture and the world of work

In the field of cultural studies work in the perspective of national culture has set strongly to other approaches , especially from transnational research Hofstede in the 80s. His work therefore gain weight the growing interest of multinational studies, such as increasing development of international cooperation. His approach promotes a vision of the world of work marked by differences in national origin of the members of each team. Their findings have been further reinforced by the results obtained by other scientists in the industry (Schneider and Barsoux , 2003; Stalh and Javidan, 2009) Why the difference in nationality is above other cultural features weight as ethnicity or social class? For Hofstede subjects construct their identity and value patterns through shared socialization process in their own countries . Aspects such as the education system , local customs and experiences in the world of work vary inevitably from one to another part of the world . All these experiences contribute to the acquisition of a mental software (Hofstede, 1999) to determine various socio-cultural behaviors and a particular way of seeing the world . This is a factor that differentiates us from other nationalities and also facilitates a shared vision with our own countrymen. Also Inglehart also focused its studies on the evolution of our values to the field of multiculturalism and national differences (Inglehart 1997, Inglehart and Welzel , 2005). His work increased their diffusion from the creation of the World Values Survey (World Value Survey : WVS) in 1990.

Discussion

The results analyzed in WVS for time spent working further underscore the known deficiencies of the south in productivity since, having the time factor in the denominator of the formula, it concluded that in northern citizens must work hard (productivity) to produce more in less time . This picture speaks highly of the business organization north, as well as appropriate use of technology , but , above that, we must emphasize cultural factors . More time is spent (the North) to work in the case of the South , but lower productivity of your hours takes them to a lower output . This suggests a different use of the working day : more extensive , but much more conditioned by the individual and social life of the worker , based on purely cultural issues (here it is the reflection on the labor activity in the South continue to be made a split shift) . Apart from the cultural tradition that emphasizes the social disorder that perpetuates the conference (Paugam , 2007; Simmel, 1998 [1907]), the phenomenon generates the feeling that the South - under pressure from the markets and society consumer- enter circumstances " or overtime " to compensate for the non use of time (unproductive) . Now these last reflections only intended to collect evidence, to invite greater depth in future studies.

After a long period of economic dominance in northern Europe on the south can generate the sense of

structural phenomenon with little prospect of change. Certainly Europe has fallen very significantly in recent times (Lamo de Espinosa, 2010) giving power to other parts of the world. MGI 's study (2010) reveals evidence that the recent financial failure and socioeconomic South has become overcharging that might sink the ship . In the south is to recover the key to revival of the continent and the EU. The recent history lesson should help the countries of the South do not fall back on that ethnocentric and traditional view of the Mediterranean as a place to live best place and sufficient resources. Also, if we observe the behavior of the whole continental economy , the efforts to reduce economic differences north - south through the political guidelines of the European Union and its powerful structure of subsidies have not reached , with the passage of time, as expected (De la Fuente 2005 , González Rodríguez et al. 2000). While the previous approaches, are not intended to invite these companies to pessimism. The theory and pointed to the idea that to rebuild a national culture and work do not need extended periods of time (Geertz : 1973) . A couple of generations may be sufficient. In this regard we must look at the case of the Nordic countries, in less than a century went from having a secondary role in the economy exemplary welfare states. Also, in reverse, the four southern countries each passed their goodr cycles in the past and should not lose hope for a better future for their descendants.

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