Impact of Cultural Differences on Knowledge Transfer in British, Hungarian and Polish Enterprises

Aleksandra Hauke

NOTA DI LAVORO 50.2006

APRIL 2006

KTHC - Knowledge, Technology, Human Capital

Aleksandra Hauke, *University of Economics, Poznań, Poland*

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Summary

The aim of the article is to verify the hypothesis, that despite the cultural differences existing among Great Britain, Hungary and Poland, all enterprises put much effort to ensure good conditions for knowledge sharing by their employees. It consists of two major parts. In the first one, the theoretical concepts of culture and knowledge are presented. In the second part, the interpretation of results obtained in research on macro and micro level analyses in three European countries are shown. The macro level analysis is based on the differences in cultural dimensions presented by G. Hofstede and R. Gestland while the micro level analysis is conducted based on the results of empirical investigation carried out by International Research Group: Marketing in the XXI century, among companies operating in Great Britain, Hungary and Poland. Results obtained through this survey are compared with cultural dimensions in order to see how significant the distance between the received theory and empirical investigation is.

Keywords: Cultural Differences, Knowledge Transfer

JEL Classification: L10

This paper was presented at the First EURODIV Conference "Understanding diversity: Mapping and measuring", held in Milan on 26-27 January 2006 and supported by the Marie Curie Series of Conferences "Cultural Diversity in Europe: a Series of Conferences", EURODIV, Contract No. MSCF-CT-2004-516670.

Address for correspondence:

Aleksandra Hauke
early-stage researcher
University of Economics
al. Niepodległości 10
60-967 Poznań
Poland
E-mail: a.hauke@ae.poznan.pl

1. Culture and knowledge- theory review

Despite ongoing unification and globalisation process, cultural differences still play a very important role in achieving success in a business relationship. They may impact positively, by facilitating the communication between employees and business partners, but also may inhibit knowledge transfer and as a result, deter the competitive position of an enterprise. That is why it is crucial to be aware that culture influences meaningfully the will to share knowledge within an enterprise and in a relationship.

Culture has a very significant impact on many domains of science- from anthropology and sociology to management. Hence many definitions have been created for the use of every discipline. For the needs of this article culture is confined as customs, beliefs, art, music and all the other products of human thought made by a particular group of people at a certain time (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary British). The most important elements of every culture are: material life, language, social interactions, aesthetics, religion, education, and value system (M. Kotabe, K. Helsen 2001: 109-121).

Culture may have its sources in different aspects of human life, as: language, nationality, education, profession, group, religion, family, social class, corporate culture (J.-C. Usunier 2000: 12). All these elements influence every member of a society and thus, during reciprocal interactions, culture is learnt and transmitted to others. Culture cannot be limited only to the sum of elements. It is an ongoing process of acquiring and transmitting those factors.
Many scientists, like G.Hofstede (2000), E.T.Hall (2000,2001), R.Gestland (2000), F.Trompenaars and Ch.Hampden-Turner (2002) have examined the differences between the national cultures and their influence on the enterprise. The interesting concept of the impact of culture on the company was presented by F.Bradley (F.Bradley 1991: 126). It links the cultural environment of a firm, with micro level impact of culture on an enterprise. According to his line of argument, the most influencing factors on macro level are: cultural variability (how fast the components of a culture are changing), cultural complexity (how easy is to understand culture through given data and facts), cultural hostility (the attitude of the environment towards a foreign enterprise), cultural heterogeneity (the degree of homogeneity of a culture of a country in which a firm operates in), and cultural interdependence (how changes that take place in other surrounding cultures influence the cultural environment in a

given country). What concerns the micro level, F.Bradley underlines the influence of national ideology (positively correlated in countries of strong cultural identity), perception of foreigners as well as foreign products and attitude towards the diffusion of innovation.
Those elements have a very significant impact on the strategy of a company and its willingness to create good conditions for knowledge sharing. The multi-layered influence of those factors show how complicated for the managers may be the proper understanding of cultural differences among people working in an enterprise and its co-operators.

Knowledge has become one of the factors of micro-competitiveness, which can be characterised as the ability of a company to raise productivity and develop new products and markets in terms of, each time, more fierce competition (D.Simpson 2005: 191-200). Therefore, the good knowledge transfer and culture promoting knowledge sharing among employees and co-operators are crucial in reaching competitive advantage by an enterprise.

According to the literature preview, knowledge may be defined as the mixture of experience, values, contextual information and expert insight that enables evaluation and absorption of new experiences and information (T.Davenport, L.Prusak 1998: 1-12; B.B.Nielsen 2002: 28-44; C.Pahlberg 2001: 169-181). Still the vastest definition is the one proposed by the Longman Dictionary where knowledge is understood as what a person knows, the facts, information, skills and understanding that one has gained especially through learning or experience. As it can be assumed, knowledge is not just a simple sum of exiting data or pieces of information- only by transforming it while learning, knowledge arouses. This is why terms like data, information, facts and skills cannot be used in exchange.

To describe the difference between knowledge and information a very useful is the remark made by W.Grudzewski and I.Hejduk (2004:76). They state that knowledge is strictly linked to a person while information may exist independently, as a document, for example. That is why it is so important for a company to encourage people to share what they know with others. The most crucial is the knowledge which is the outcome of the analysis and transformation of different pieces of information. In a result of that time-consuming process comapny may reach better competitiveness.

The creation of knowledge takes place when data, experience and information are chosen and transformed so as to suit the best to the needs of an enterprise. In that phase, also called construction of knowledge (M. Bratnicki, L. Panasiewicz, Warsaw 2000) enterprises may extract knowledge from external sources or from an interaction between new and existing ones. The absorption of knowledge is the next step. Absorptive capacity of a firm is the ability to acquire, assimilate, adapt and apply new knowledge.

There are two major ways of learning by organizations- either through their own experience (by interpretation of past results) or through the experience of other partners (by transfer of technologies, routines or procedures) (H.Håkansson, M.Huysman, A.von Raesfeld Meijer 2001: 17-21; A.Delios, P.W.Beamish 2001). That is why a good atmosphere inside a company as well in a business relationship with partners is so important. According to sociological observation, people tend to group themselves in little informal groups (Z.Antczak, 2004:74). Social networks play a very important role in knowledge sharing among people. They are being created on non-formal basis between people working in a company and constitute a very good way of transferring knowledge. Informal networks enhance the formal structure of a company. By casual conversation people may exchange their opinions, search for an idea or solution to a problem. The lack of formal procedures makes the knowledge exchange more spontaneous. People are willing to share their doubts with others and ask them for help.

There are two main types of knowledge namely explicit and tacit. The most difficult to share with others is latter one. It is much individualised and sometimes even impossible to transmit it to others. In contrast to the tacit, the explicit knowledge is easily transformed so as everybody could use it for its own purpose.[*]

As it can be assumed, one of the most difficult tasks is to disseminate the tacit knowledge within an enterprise. Four types of converting knowledge are: socialization, externalisation, combination and internalisation (more in: I.Nonaka, H.Takeuchi 2000: 85-98). The aim is to enable the absorption of new knowledge by the employees of a company. The knowledge a company possesses decides about reaching the competitive advantage. It is kept and revealed in routines, processes, practices and norms and is unique for every company.

Two important elements for efficient knowledge transfer, defined as „the aggregate volume of know-how and information transmitted per unit of time" (M.Schulz 2001:662), are transmission and absorption. They both play a crucial role in reaching the success in knowledge transfer among employees within a company. Very important aspect is proper management of knowledge flows- type and quantity of knowledge have to adjust to the needs and the absorptive capacity of every worker. Too much of it may provoke rejection, too little, the lack of needed information or data.

The indispensable element for successful knowledge transfer and effective knowledge sharing among people in an enterprise is trust. It is being established through long time cooperation and is very easy to be impaired. The main elements influencing trust-building are: the reliance on and confidence in the truth, worth and reliability of a person or a thing, direction to the future and to common achievements, sharing common faith, beliefs, possibly education or group membership (J.C. Usunier, 2000: 546-548). Due to inter-dependability, which is the result of trust (M.Elo, 2003) people tend to avoid opportunistic behaviours. They are aware that only by cooperation and sincerity, trust may be created and developed and more complex knowledge may circulate, which may bring positive effects on final results of a company.

Good reciprocal relations between co-operators are not a one-time task. They are being created throughout long-time partnership and mutual assistance. During that time the basis for secure exchange of information are being created. Both sides are aware that any opportunistic behaviour and short-time goals are not profitable in long-time perspective. Good relations between the companies enhance cooperation and develop trust. As a result, more complex knowledge circulates among them having synergic effects for both sides.

There are many barriers that impede knowledge- sharing between people. They may have their source either in objective or subjective barriers.

According to research (W.Grudzewski, I.Hajduk, 2004:126-127; P.Tomczak, P.Markowski 2004; T.Davenport, L.Prusak 1998: 88-106), as the objective barriers in smooth knowledge transfer may be assumed:

- unfavourable organizational culture,
- undeveloped communication within enterprise,
- different technological background,
- organisational culture promoting the results and not experience sharing,
- little commitment of managers in knowledge sharing process,

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* more about tacit and explicit knowledge and the ways of converting it inside an enterprise in: I.Nonaka, H.Takeuchi 2000: 82-85.

- lack of motivation from superiors for knowledge sharing,
- intolerance for mistakes or need for help,
- not well defined persons who have knowledge that is needed,
- status and rewards given to knowledge owners,
- lack of financial incentives promoting the research for new knowledge and transfer of it,
- lack of time.

As it can be seen, the managers play a very important role in creating good conditions not only inside an enterprise but also with business partners. Knowledge sharing may be facilitated by creating good internal conditions to secure that process (like sufficient technical infrastructure or reserving time for meetings), as well as encouraging people to share their knowledge with others (by motivating them or giving assistance in case of trouble). Those barriers may be avoided if managers pay attention to knowledge flows and knowledge exchange process within a company. They also have to be aware that it is also their responsibility to ensure appropriate atmosphere to encourage people to share their knowledge.

Still there are many subjective obstacles to knowledge transfer within a company. They have their source in psychical barriers of every human being. Even if good conditions for that process are created, many people may not be willing to share their knowledge with others. The main sources of those hindrances are:

- protection of own position/specialisation,
- lack of sentiment that the knowledge that one posses may be useful for other people working in the organisation,
- internal fear- not being sure if the ideas are good enough,
- lower-lever workers feel being discriminated,
- fear of only giving information- without receiving it from others,
- lack of trust,
- fear of changes,
- sentiment that others will not know how to use such a complicated knowledge,
- high self-esteem.

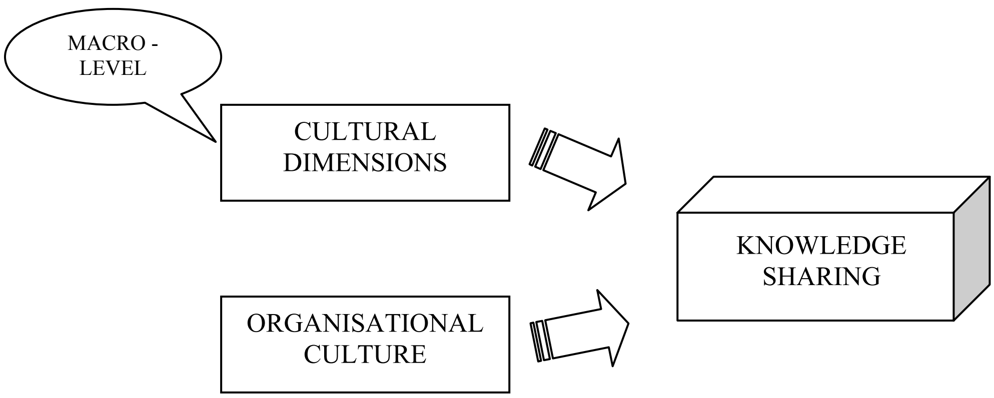
The barriers may have diachronic source- either people are not willing to share their knowledge because they think they are not good enough, or their self- esteem is so high that they believe there are no appropriate people to receive it. Other psychical barriers to knowledge transfer are connected with the position one has in a company. In that case, the important role of manager is crucial. People have to be assured that even if they share their very specific or tacit knowledge with others, their position in a company is not endangered.

Creating and promoting knowledge-sharing culture is very difficult task for managers, independently from the cultural background they have. Only by encouraging people to share what they know, and by ensuring them in that process, company may reach planned goals and develop its potential.

2. Cultural dimensions of Hungary, Great Britain and Poland by G.Hofstede and R.Gesteland

Knowledge–sharing process is influenced both by the cultural dimensions, and the organizational culture inside an enterprise. Cultural dimension show the overall characteristics of a country. They may significantly influence the knowledge transfer within enterprise as well as among business partners. It is crucial for managers to overcome potential barriers to knowledge transfer that may appear due to different background. In order to form the organizational culture that creates good conditions to share knowledge, managers have to be aware that cultural impact has two-levels influence on the enterprise- the macro and the micro one. And only by combining them, the company may reach success in knowledge sharing.

Figure 1: Elements influencing knowledge transfer



Source: own study

The environment and the mode of life one lives in, determine in a great extent its attitude towards other people or situations. That is why it may be interesting to examine, which cultural dimensions, from the macro-level perspective, proposed by G.Hofstede and R.Gesteland may, in theory, have a positive impact on organizational culture and willingness to share knowledge. As the most favourable are recognised: smaller power distance, high level of collectivism, femininity, uncertainty avoidance, future orientation, outer direction, low context, achieved status, informal and partnership focus culture (A.Hauke, 2004).

Small power distance by bringing down the gap between the superior and subordinates has a positive effect on knowledge sharing process in a company. People working at a lower position are not afraid to show, sometimes very helpful for all company ideas, or ask for help. Also managers demonstrate their interest in problems that other face and try to help them. The lack of formal distance makes the flow of information in both directions more intense, and much new knowledge may be created in smooth conversation. It also helps in contacts with business partners from other companies. The distance between managers is not that big, what may positively impact the future cooperation between enterprises.

When people operating in a company are aware that group working give better results than individual work, they are more propitious to cooperate with others and to share their knowledge with colleagues, also from other companies. That is why, in collectivistic cultures knowledge sharing is much more facilitated.

Another cultural dimension that has a positive effect on knowledge sharing is the feminity of the culture. In such a culture reconciliation, not aggression and self-achievement are the most important element. It is only in an atmosphere of cooperation when people feel secure to share their knowledge with co-workers.

Low level of uncertainty avoidance is correlated with lack of rules and regulations in a company. That is why people working in an enterprise do not encounter formal barriers, like regulations, while communicating to other co-workers. When those who work in a company are willing to take risk, they also feel responsible for their decisions which results in higher self- esteem and better satisfaction of achieved success.

Employees from outer-directed or expressive cultures find it easier to affiliate with other people from a company even if they barely know them. By being outgoing, they communicate their doubts and thoughts. In consequence they build informal networks, which enable knowledge sharing across people. These informal networks are also being build on the basis of ongoing cooperation between different companies, which is positively correlated with knowledge-sharing process among them.

Expressing thoughts in a straightforward manner helps dealing with a problem. Low context of communication facilitates the expression of opinions as well as the answer to a given question. People do no have to look for hidden meaning that is behind the sentence. They may focus on main message and freely articulate their idea.

People from achieved-status cultures give importance to own achievements. That is why is it vital to cooperate with others in order to look for a solution. Every member of a company owes the position she or he has not to the social provenience but to the personal abilities. To reach the success, knowledge sharing is indispensable.

As other important factors promoting knowledge sharing of are recognised: informal and partnership focus culture. Good relations inside and outside a company and well-developed social networks have a considerable impact on the willingness to share knowledge with other co-workers. Due to informal networks people build trust while partnership orientation helps to develop it, by reducing the possibility of opportunistic behaviours. People are aware that destroying well-established informal relations is not worth short-time profits. In consequence, employees are not afraid to share sometimes very specific knowledge, crucial for the success of a company.

3. Empirical investigation among companies from Hungary, Great Britain and Poland

The deductive approach towards the influence of cultural dimension on the promptness of people to share their knowledge has been presented above. In this part of the article, the cultural dimensions of Great Britain, Hungary and Poland will be compared. They have been established on the basis of the research undertook by G.Hofestede and R.Gesteland. It seems interesting from a scientific point of view to observe how do these general and deductive statements about cultural dimensions and their impact on knowledge sharing have the reflection on micro-level base. That is why this theoretical approach will be supported by practical investigation, so as to verify the hypothesis:

H1: Despite the cultural differences existing among Great Britain, Hungary and Poland, all enterprises try to ensure good conditions for knowledge sharing among their employees and co-operators.

Table 1: Dimensions of Polish, Hungarian and British culture

Cultural dimensions	**Great Britain**	**Hungary**	**Poland**
Power distance	Low	Medium	Very high
Individualism/ Collectivism	Very high individualism	Rather high individualism	High individualism
Masculinity/ Feminity	Rather high masculinity	Very high masculinity	High masculinity
Uncertainty avoidance	Rather high	Very high	Very high
Long- time orientation	Low	Medium	Low
Relationship/ Deal focused	Deal-focused	Mixed	Mixed
Formal/ Informal	Mixed	Formal	Formal
Reserved/ Expressive	Reserved	Expressive	Mixed

Source: own source on the basis of G. Hofstede (2000) and R. Gesteland (2000)

According to studies undertook by G.Hofstede (2000) and R.Gesteland (2000), Great Britain is a country that is characterised by very high level of individualism and quite high levels of masculinity and uncertainty avoidance. Power distance is low and short-time orientation is predominating. United Kingdom's culture is deal–focused and reserved, with not well-defined formality or informality dimension. It may be assumed that in terms of cultural dimensions' impact on sharing knowledge, this process may be very difficult. Only one dimension – low power distance- is in favour of it. Another presumption is that among British people, knowledge transfer may encounter many impediments.

In that research Hungary is characterised as a culture of a very high masculinity and a very high level of uncertainty avoidance. Power distance index and long-time orientation are in an average scale, and the culture is quite individualistic. It is neither deal nor relationship-focused culture. Hungarians are assumed to be expressive but formal people. How do these may impact knowledge sharing process? It may encounter problems, because, as in the case of Great Britain, only one dimension (in that case the expressive culture) may theoretically facilitate knowledge transfer.

Concerning Poland, none of the dimensions may have positive impact on knowledge sharing process in a company, in a theoretical approach. It is highly masculine and formal culture. The level of individualism and masculinity is also high, as well as uncertainty avoidance. Polish people have short-time orientation. It is between expressive and reserved but also between relationship-deal focused culture.

Those cultural dimensions show, that among three countries none of them has a culture that predominantly supports the knowledge sharing process inside a company. Among examined countries the best conditions are in Great Britain and Hungary, and the worst in Poland.

For the needs of this article, questions have been limited to verify the correlation between long-time orientation, deal/relationship focus, and reserved/expressive cultural dimension and their impact on knowledge –sharing inside and outside the company. In that limited set of dimension it can be deducted that Hungarian managers should be the most propitious towards encouraging the sharing of knowledge, while British should have more problems in that field. This is why it would be interesting to examine if this theoretical and deductive approach has its reflection in the results of the survey.

4. Empirical investigation among British, Hungarian and Polish enterprises.

To verify the hypothesis, empirical results of international project: Marketing in the XXI century. The project was realised by International Research Group among companies in Poland, Great Britain, Ireland, Finland, Austria, Hungary and Slovenia. It was conducted in April and May 2001. In Poland the responsible for the project was K.Fonfara (Wielkopolska Business School by University of Economics, Poznań), in Great Britain G.Hooley and in Hungary J.Beracs.

The results presented in tables below, constrain to enterprises operating in production and wholesale industry branch. The sample consisted of 82 enterprises that hire more than 500 employees and produce capital industrial equipment as well as materials and components. The results have been collected from 39 enterprises from Great Britain, 15 from Hungary and 28 from Poland. The selection of such a sample was deliberate. Business to business sector had been chosen for the needs of nearby article as informal contacts and long-time cooperation play very important role in that market. On B2B market companies are in very close business relations with others. During such collaboration, trust is being created and maintained. As it was highlighted in previous section of the article, that element is indispensable for ensuring good flow of knowledge among workers from different enterprises, as well as inside a company. Trust is extremely indispensable when partners have access to technical infrastructure and know-how of the other part. It is also extremely difficult to establish good conditions for knowledge transfer in big companies, where people do not know all co-workers and co-operators personally. That is why the results of enterprises hiring more than 500 people may respond better to the hypothesis, as they show if managers organise knowledge-sharing process effectively.

Creating good reciprocal and sincere relations among business partners is a very demanding task. As it has been stressed before, both sides have to be willing to cooperate and exchange information. The crucial element for such a smooth knowledge sharing between business partners is trust.

In the questionnaire the managers were asked about their attitude towards the contacts with business partners. In the first question, concerning regular visits to important customers' companies, in all countries the answers confirmed that top managers regularly visit important customers. The assumption that should arouse from the answers to that question is linked with partnership orientation. On that basis of regular visits partnership approach is being created and maintained. Business partners meet regularly and exchange their opinions, also on the quality of a given cooperation. The results of cultural dimensions' comparison revealed that none of countries was relationship focused. The Great Britain had been evaluated as a deal-focus culture, while Hungary and Poland as countries of mixed focus. Still there are also some differences among questioned countries in empirical results. In Great Britain, the difference between the top managers who visit important customers is not as significant as the one in Poland and Hungary (in the latter all managers regularly visit important customers). Another cultural dimension that impacts trust building is long time orientation, that is low in Great Britain and Poland and medium in Hungary.

The results obtained in that question mean that managers in those three countries are keen on developing good relationships with business partners and are devoted to improve cooperation and satisfaction of customers. That is why all countries have long-time and partnership orientation attitude because they attach much importance to ensure good atmosphere of a relationship. Thanks to it, their may improve their relationship and exchange more complex knowledge.

In all questioned countries, information about customers is freely communicated throughout the company. The results answer the question if the system of circulation of information is well established and developed, and if people are willing to spend time to inform others about the customers. In expressive cultures people are more outgoing and due to it, are better in communicating. In all countries managers consented that in their companies information about customers circulates freely. Still there are significant differences among respondents who agreed and disagreed in every country. The biggest disparity is observed in Hungary, the lowest in Great Britain.

The interesting aspect of this part of the questionnaire is relatively small percentage of negative answers. Managers either really are so good in external and internal communication and knowledge-sharing, or they declare it, without confirmation in facts. Great Britain is more balanced when giving positive and negative answers.

Table 2: Empirical results from Great Britain, Hungary and Poland

	Great Britain		Hungary		Poland	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	disagree	Agree	disagree
Top management regularly visits important customers	47	35,2	81,9	0,0	70,3	22,2
Information about customers is freely communicated throughout the company	41,2	35,3	63,7	27,3	59,2	33,3

Results of the survey: Marketing in the XXI century [*]

Marketing resources' application questions were divided into two groups: concerning alliance-based assets and capabilities.

The question that had the most varied answers concerns sharing of technology through strategic alliances. British enterprises cannot clearly declare that their have advantage on that field, on the contrary to Hungary. In that country managers stated that they see their advantage in sharing technology. In Poland in the majority, these are the competitors of questioned companies that have advantage over the enquired enterprises. It may indicate that

[*] The sum of answers does not equal 100 as neutral answers were ignored

Polish companies do not trust others when it comes to share their knowledge. They prefer to keep that source of competitive advantage away from co-operators. Totally opposite is the situation in Hungary. Enterprises exchange their information, data, and technology to other business partners. It also emphasises the awareness of managers who prefer to cooperate and have access to others' knowledge instead of competing. This may imply that Hungarian managers are long-time oriented and see their opportunity in a very tight cooperation. As it can be assumed, Hungarian may tend to be more partnership oriented. On the other side are the Polish managers who are not willing to exchange knowledge with business partners. In Great Britain the same respond rate was for both possible answers so no conclusions may be drawn.

When it comes to access partner's very specific and strategic knowledge, the enterprises from all the countries see their advantage in it. As much better to competitors evaluate themselves Hungarians. Also managers from Great Britain and from Poland see their advantage in having admission to partners' strategic know-how and expertise. In those countries the differences in positive and negative answers are not that spanned. Hungarian managers seem to be the most partnership and long-time oriented, while Polish managers look less like this.

British companies declare that their competitors are better in internal communication while the strong advantage on that field declared Hungarian managers. Six times more of them claim to be better in this type of communication. In Poland that difference is not that big, still the majority consider being better than competitors in communicating internally across the organisation. As it can be deducted from the results, British managers are reserved and rather short time oriented (if there is no good communication, no exchange of ideas takes place and no knowledge-transfer exists). The most expressive seem to be Hungarians.

Polish companies see their advantage over competitors also in using information about markets, customers and competitors. In this question Polish managers have much more confidence in themselves than Hungarians and British. The interesting is that the span between Polish and British companies even though is significant in both countries, is bigger in Great Britain. That indicates that information flow is well developed in British enterprises. Polish managers are the best, among three examined countries in managing knowledge in their enterprises, while the worst results in that field have been observed in Hungary. It may be deducted that Polish managers, paying so much attention to knowledge management, are future oriented.

As is can be remarked from the results shown in Table 3 Hungarian managers declare to have the biggest advantage in alliance-based assets over their competitors. The weakest in field consider themselves Polish – the smallest percentage of them sees their advantage over competitors.

When it comes to capabilities of companies run in Great Britain, Hungary and Poland, the best claim to be Hungarians as well, while Polish and British managers with quite the same percentage see the advantage of their competitors.

Table 3: Use of marketing resources among British, Hungarian and Polish enterprises.

	Great Britain		Hungary		Poland	
	Our advantage	Competitor's advantage	Our advantage	Competitor's advantage	Our advantage	Competitor's advantage
Alliance based assets:						
Shared technology through strategic alliances	29,4	29,4	27,3	9,1	11,1	33,3
Access to strategic partners' material know-how and expertise	23,5	14,2	36,4	18,2	18,5	14,8
Capabilities:						
Good at communicating internally across the organisation	23,5	35,3	63,6	9,1	37,0	25,9
Good at using information about markets, customers and competitors	41,2	5,9	36,4	36,4	51,8	14,8

Results of the survey Marketing in the XXI century *

The results presented in Table 2 and Table 3, show that the most partnership and long-time oriented are managers from Hungary. In the majority of questions they revealed such features of business attitude towards co-operators and employees. It may suggest that they ought to promote knowledge transfer within a company and among business partners. When it comes to Poland and Great Britain, the cultural dimensions deducted on the basis of the questionnaire reveal that knowledge sharing may encounter barriers. Managers are more reserved and deal-focused. They are also short-time oriented. In such conditions employees find it difficult to share what they know with others.

5. Further investigations

Every company operates in different surroundings. Still some of the external factors may have important and unique influence on its operational strategy and knowledge-sharing process. Cultural factors as well as organizational culture of a company play a very important role.

* The sum of answers does not equal 100 as neutral answers were ignored

They decide in a great extent about the atmosphere that is created inside a firm as well as with co-operators. Among the dimensions that are the most favourable to the exchange of knowledge, for the needs of this article were chosen: long-time orientation, expressive, and partnership focus cultures.

Research has indicated that among three countries- Great Britain, Hungary and Poland, the most favourable culture towards knowledge –sharing is recognised Hungary.

Still, the empirical results sustained the thesis that despite cultural differences and cultural dimensions impacting knowledge-sharing process, all countries promote knowledge-sharing between their employees as well as co-operators.

An interesting thing to underline are the not so good results of Great Britain in the process. It may have three main reasons- British managers are more realistic and do answer more rationally rather than the managers from new-economy countries, like Hungary and Poland. Secondly, the sample of companies of Hungary is smaller to the one from Great Britain, and due to it, the results may not be that much comparable. And finally, the impact of cultural dimensions that may facilitate knowledge-sharing in Hungary and hinder it in Great Britain.

The further investigation should concentrate on the deeper investigation on macro and micro-level impact on knowledge-sharing between the countries. It would be interesting to enlarge the questionnaire to verify if the cultural dimensions impact significantly knowledge-sharing process in companies from different cultural background.

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(lxxviii) This paper was presented at the Second International Conference on "Tourism and Sustainable Economic Development - Macro and Micro Economic Issues" jointly organised by CRENoS (Università di Cagliari and Sassari, Italy) and Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei, Italy, and supported by the World Bank, Chia, Italy, 16-17 September 2005.
(lxxix) This paper was presented at the International Workshop on "Economic Theory and Experimental Economics" jointly organised by SET (Center for advanced Studies in Economic Theory, University of Milano-Bicocca) and Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei, Italy, Milan, 20-23 November 2005. The Workshop was co-sponsored by CISEPS (Center for Interdisciplinary Studies in Economics and Social Sciences, University of Milan-Bicocca).
(lxxx) This paper was presented at the First EURODIV Conference "Understanding diversity: Mapping and measuring", held in Milan on 26-27 January 2006 and supported by the Marie Curie Series of Conferences "Cultural Diversity in Europe: a Series of Conferences.

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