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Cross-Cultural-Management

**Authors revisited:  
Kluckhohn/ Strodtbeck**

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**The Pioneers**

Excerpt of MASTER'S THESIS

“Managing International Cooperations: Evaluation of models measuring national cultural differences and their implications for business, illustrated with the examples of India, Japan & Germany”

[The Title of this publication deviates from the original title of the chapter in the master's thesis]

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## 1.1 Florence Kluckhohn/ Fred L. Strodtbeck

Persons polled	Cultures analyzed	Questionnaire items	Dimensions
120	5	22	5

Fig. 13: Brief overview of the cultural study of Kluckhohn/ Strodtbeck.<sup>7</sup>

Source: Own Illustration.

Florence Kluckhohn and Fred L. Strodtbeck created a measurement model for the differences of indigenous cultures of the Rimrock communities of Southwest USA (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961, p. 49). One might argue about the relevance of indigenous societies for management, however Kluckhohn/ Strodtbeck can be considered to be the early ground-breaking pioneers who not only created the idea of splitting a culture into measurable dimensions, an approach which was later adopted by all later models, but also in terms measuring cultural differences in societies at all. In later studies by other authors, Kluckhohn/ Strodtbeck's work was directly connected with US- management relevant questions (e.g. Adler/ Gundersen 2007, p. 22-35, cited in Kutschker, Schmid, 2011, pp. 676-677).

In order to describe cultural differences, Kluckhohn/ Strodtbeck defined five dimensions:

**Nature of man:** There are two ways of considering this dimension. Firstly, as a static dimension, i.e. the nature of man never changes during his life, and secondly as dynamic dimension, which relates to the changes of a human being over time. Since there has been significant differences among the investigated cultures it leads to the conclusion that apart from individual tendencies, cultural tendencies of either confidence or mistrust towards others also exist (Kutschker, Schmid, 2011, p. 705).

**Relationship of man and nature** occurs in the range of three expressions. First is Subjugation-to-Nature, second in Harmony-with-Nature and third Mastery-over-

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<sup>7</sup> Approximation. Not stated exactly in the original source. Data source: Kluckhohn, Strodtbeck, 1961, p. 49.

Nature, i.e. the tendency to dominate nature (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961, p. 13). With respect to management this dimension becomes relevant to company goals, whether they are targeted dependently or independently of external influences. Goals in enterprises, specifically those with the tendency of control of nature, are presented in a quantitative way, whereas goals for companies in societies that show tendencies of subordination to nature are expressed more vaguely (Kutschker, Schmid, 2011, pp. 706-707).

**Relationship among humans:** Differentiates individualistic and collectivistic cultures. The importance to the human resources policies of enterprises needs to be mentioned here in particular, where a job applicant's individual performance is regarded in terms of his fitting into the existing collective of a company. In decision-making processes individualistic societies also tend to be taken by one person in comparison to collective societies, where they are taken in groups, which increases the complexity but may ease the execution of the process after the decision has been taken (Kutschker, Schmid, 2011, pp. 707-708).

**Time orientation:** This dimension describes a society generally as past, present or future oriented. In the literature, examples are given of the Spanish-American society, which is present oriented, does not consider what happened in the past and lacks the tendency to plan for the future, regarding it as vague and unpredictable. In comparison to historical China where the value preference has been past oriented, by worshipping ancestors and maintaining family traditions. But also European countries are mentioned as past oriented (e.g. Great Britain), whereas the U.S. society has a high future orientation tendency: A desire to make things bigger and better, with a high tendency of change that isn't felt to be a threat to its own value system (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961, pp. 13-15).

**Activity orientation** illustrates how individuals in activity driven cultures tend to aim to achieve as much as possible in life. Kluckhohn/ Strodtbeck differentiate between

“being”, “being-in-becoming”, and “doing”. “Being” is described as having similarities to the indulgent components of living life as it is presented, and taking the most out of it. “Being-in-becoming” resembles, according to the authors, a type of personality that contains and controls desires with a clear goal of personal development. “Doing” reflects an activity orientation that is very dominant e.g. in US, which is dominated by the impulse to achieve accomplishments that are clearly measurable by defined standards (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961, pp. 15-17).

To summarize, Kluckhohn/ Strodtbeck can be considered as pioneers, preparing the ground for more management oriented cultural studies that were yet to come.

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