Profile of a Leader in the Western Balkans Cultural Environment

Živka Pržulj[1], Svetolik Kostadinović [2]

[1]Faculty for Banking, Insurance and Finances, UNION University Belgrade, Serbia

[2]ALFA University Belgrade, Serbia

JEL classification: Z1

Abstract: *The aim of this paper is to point to the characteristics of leadership in the context of the Western Balkan culture. The existing research of the characteristics of culture of this region will be used as well as the characteristics of leadership style. It starts with the presentation of the existing theoretical knowledge on interdependence between leadership and culture. Methodologically, the paper is based on comparative analysis. The complexity of the phenomenon of leadership and culture as well as the lack of systematic regional surveys in this area represents considerable research constraints. Based on current research, using analogies, the characteristics of the leader are drawn within the Balkan cultural environment. This paper should contribute to a better understanding of the causes and consequences of the ways of leadership in the region and the need to learn and change in the processes of European integrations.*

Keywords: culture, leader style, Western Balkans, economy, development

1.Introduction

Globalization opens up many opportunities for business, but it also creates some major challenges. One of the most important challenges is the recognition of cultural values and practices in different parts of the world. Nowadays in the business world, it seems clear that success in global business is determined by the ability of those who run businesses to respond flexibly to the practices and values that are rooted in specific cultures and which may be drastically different in relation to the parts of the world from which companies may be coming. Also, the inclusion of certain companies and the economy of certain countries in the global economy require a leader profile that can respond to competitive challenges and fit in the international business environment. The diversity of cultures that exist in the world and a vast array of cultural adjustments to similar economic situations suggest that not all of them are equally rational. Finally, it is a very debatable question whether human beings behave like those that seek to maximize individual benefit or as those who perceive themselves as part of a larger social group [1].

It is the impact on others which is the main reason why leadership is so important organizational and social issue. The ability of leaders to influence the followers stems from their power. The sources of power of leaders lay primary in their personal charisma, skills and competencies. If this is combined with formal sources of power, then the leader can have a huge impact on the group, organization or society. The largest and most important power is the interpretive power, or *the power of leaders to shape the reality of their followers* [2]. It is the realization of the strength of this source of power and the globalization of economic processes that encouraged the research of and insights into the leadership from the perspective of culture.

The importance of culture for interpretation of social phenomena results from its impact on behavior. It is very easily expressed by Hofstede in his understanding that the culture is mental programming that distinguishes one social group from another [3]. Using social impact, the culture balances and stabilizes the behavior of members of a particular social unit and provides guidance in decision making. Culture is a framework for behavior and a way of dealing with entrepreneurial problems by directing perception and interpretive schemes, working in layers of the subconsciousness in the form of underlying assumptions or premises, which express the relationship towards the world and a man, as well as the values, beliefs and norms of behavior, which are in the essence of the social systems.

2.Review of Previous Research

The relationship between culture and leadership can be characterized primarily as the relationship of mutual dependence and influence. This was pointed out by Shein in his famous work *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. Leaders through their decisions expresse the values and behavioral patterns of society in which they lives, and reinforces the existing culture through the impact on followers. Here the culture involves a system of shared values, beliefs, rules of behavior, the meaning of the symbols and traditions characteristic of a group or social individual, which determine their characteristics or specific features by which this group is different from the others. These shared qualities make them unique [4].

National culture is the basis for understanding the organizational culture, which expresses the specific features of the way members of an organization work, think, act, make decisions and face problems. Although organizational culture is determined by other factors, too (type of the task, education of employees, market characteristics), the leader is the creator and promoter of the organizational culture and most often it is the leader who in their decisions and ways of solving problems transfers and expresses transmit national culture. Shein [5] suggests that the leader shapes the culture of a social group (organization) so that their perceptions and

Paper ID: SEP14509

2026

beliefs about the goals and purposes of entrepreneurial activity are transferred to the other members of the organization.

In the study of the influence of culture on leadership, the dimensions of culture which are commonly used are identified by Hofstede in the project of comparative cultural research, which was carried out in 72 IBM subsidiaries in various countries, including 116,000 respondents in the period 1967-1973 [6]. The results of this study have laid the foundation for most subsequent research. This research included the former Yugoslavia, too. Many studies are based on Hofstede's model of national culture. This model was initially developed in terms of differences in values and beliefs with respect to work goals. Hofstede considers the characteristics of a national culture through the following key dimensions: *power distance* (PDI), uncertainty avoidance (UAI), individualism (IDV), masculinity (MAS). Although Hofstede later under the influence of Confucianism added temporal orientation, these four dimensions are commonly used as a basis for understanding the relationship between culture and important demographic, geographic, economic, political and national indicators.

These four dimensions are the foundation for analyzing the impact of culture on leadership styles. They are taken as the starting point within the GLOBE study [7] which expands the dimensions of culture with additional four elements: orientation to results, gender equality, teamwork orientation, and humane orientation. According to these dimensions the leadership styles were determined that are prevalent in certain culture.

Since leadership is based on the ability of leaders to influence the followers and such influence derives from the power and authority, it is logical to distinguish power distance as a dimension of culture that influences leadership most. If we take into consideration Likert´s leadership styles (authoritarian-dictatorial, authoritarian-benevolent, participatory, democratic), it can be concluded that the concentration of power of the leaders and passive position of the employed, is the greatest in the first, and the weakest in the latter case. This explains why the authoritative style is most present in cultures with high power distance, while democratic style prevails in cultures with low power distance (PD Index). In a culture with huge power distance the influence is achieved by ordering and control, which are the instruments that best fit the demonstration of personal power and the formal source of power. In such cultures, it is desirable that a leader is decisive, quick and aggressive, unlike cultures with low power distance that encourage participative style and the leaders are expected to be practical, precise and correct. Leaders in cultures with high power distance more often abuse their power. It can be said that in such cultures it is accepted and even expected behavior, because their power is above the rules, regulations and laws. Usually in such cultures rules are not obeyed, and the rights and needs are realized through 'intervention' of people who have certain power [8].

Collectivism-individualism in some culture is expressed by the focus of the leaders on tasks or relationships, which according to Blake and Mouton determins the leadership style [9]. In collectivist cultures, it can be expected that leaders put common interest in the foreground in relation to the individual. Also, they require greater loyalty and obedience of the group. The focus is on caring for people and the relationship of the individual and the group is more emotional than rational. Individualist cultures emphasize individual goals and calculative, or a rational relationship between the individual and the group. The primary focus is on tasks, while in collectivist cultures the main focus is on relations.

The combination of high power distance and collectivism encourages benevolent-authoritative style that manifests itself in the role of the leader as a father to his followers, who decides and takes care of the group.

Uncertainty avoidance (UA Index) is related to the way people in different cultures react to change, uncertainty and risk. The high degree of uncertainty avoidance favors styles that reduce uncertainty by leaders taking risks in decision-making, which does not favor the inclusion of the subordinates and strengthening of their role in the organization (empowerment).

Both "masculine" and "feminine" values (masculinity-femininity) have influence on the style of leadership. Female cultures are more focused on the relationships in the group, the needs of the group members (the people) and the emotional relationship between the individual and the group, while male cultures are mainly oriented towards the achievement, scores and rational (calculating) relationship of the individual and the organization. Thus, female cultures are closer to authoritarian-benevolent, and participatory styles, while male cultures are close to authoritarian-dictatorial or democratic styles, depending on other combinations of cultural characteristics [10].

The most significant contribution to research on the relationship of leadership and culture gave the GLOBE study [7]. The GLOBE (Global Leadership and Effectiveness of Organizational Behavior) research program, which lasted 10 years, used multi-methodological and multi-phase research approach and explored the relationship between social and organizational cultures, social and organizational effectiveness and leadership. The survey covered 62 countries, including answers of 17,300 managers from 191 organizations. This study identifies nine key dimensions of culture and their relation to the classification of the six global leadership ways of behavior. Through the qualitative and quantitative analysis the leaders are divided into the following categories: charismatic - value leadership; team-oriented leadership; participatory leadership; human-oriented leadership, autonomous leadership and defensive leadership.

Charismatic - value leadership seeks to inspire, motivate and encourage high performance by the subordinates based on key values. This type of leadership is positively correlated with the orientation towards results, the group collectivism and gender equality as well as cultural dimensions. It is negatively correlated with power distance.

Team-oriented leadership emphasizes the creation of an effective team and implementation of common goals among team members. This type of leadership is positively correlated with uncertainty avoidance and collectivism in the group. Participative leadership seeks to involve others in decision making and their application and it is positively correlated with the orientation on the results, gender equality and human orientation as cultural dimensions.

Human-oriented leadership is characterized by the provision of support, consideration, compassion, generosity, humility and sensitivity to people. This style is positively correlated with the following cultural characteristics:human orientation, uncertainty avoidance and assertiveness.

Autonomous leadership includes strong individualism, self-reliance, independence and uniqueness. This style is positively correlated with the orientation towards the results, and negatively correlated with human orientation and institutional collectivism.

Defensive leadership reflects behaviors that are focused on safety and security of the leaders and groups. This assumes self-orientation, highlighting the status, inducing conflict, defending positions and procedures. It is positively correlated with power distance, and uncertainty avoidance, and negatively correlated with gender equality.

The authors of the GLOBE study analyzed these leadership behaviors according to the characteristics of specific cultures thus identifying leadership profiles for each cultural group characteristic for the region. These cultural groups are identified by clusters of nine specified dimensions of culture. So they came to the following leadership profile: Latin America, Latin Europe, Confucian Asia, Nordic Europe, Anglo-American areas, German Europe, Middle East, South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern Europe.

The Western Balkan countries were not included in this study, but are closest to the area of Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Both regions are characterized by pronounced defensive and autonomous leadership, while participative leadership is the least present.

Like many previous studies, the GLOBE study attempted to determine the attributes of leadership that are universally preferred, those which are universally undesirable and those which are effective only in certain cultures. The authors identified 22 primary attributes of the leaders which are universally desirable and 8 which are considered obstacles to leaders' effectiveness. On the basis of the list of desirable attributes a portrait of the leader can be made which would universally be considered exceptional. He should have a high degree of integrity, to be charismatic and focused on values and possess excellent interpersonal skills [11]. Universally undesirable leadership attributes according to this study are the following: a lonly person, iritative, rackless, antisocial, vague, dictator, uncooperative and egocentric. Also, 35 specific attributes or leaders or behaviors have been identified that are considered useful in some cultures while in others they could be considered harmful.

Considering the relationship between cultural values and leadership attributes, researchers of the GLOBE project came to the conclusion that the leadership orientation on performance (value) is the only cultural dimension that is positively associated with five and negatively correlated with one style of leadership - a leadership that is defensive. At the same time, this study has shown that especially societies that share certain values prefer attributes or styles of leadership that support those values.

Some recent studies have shown that effective leaders must correspond to cultural demands. Brodbek et al. [12] and his colleagues conducted a large survey of middle managers (n = 6,052) from 22 European countries. The respondents were asked 112 questions dealing with the description of leadership. They should do the ranking and see how the vision fits their concept of a business leader. The results showed that, despite certain similarities among some cultures, none of the most important attributes of leadership is identical. For example, managers in Anglo-Saxon countries stated the following as the five most important attributes of an effective manager: orientation to results, inspiring style, having a vision, team integration and determination. Managers in Nordic countries emphasized the same five attributes but not in the same order. There is a noticeable difference between the northwestern European regions compared to the South East. Eastern European countries are placed in a group with Central European countries while the Middle East countries as well as Russia and Georgia are presented separately. The Western Balkan countries are not included in this study, but culturally, historically and geographically the closest countries such as Slovenia, Greece, Turkey, Italy and Hungary were referred as Southeast Europe. As the most important leadership attributes they prefer team integration, determination and vision. In contrast, the Anglo-Saxon countries put in the first place orientation towards the results and inspiration, while Scandinavian and German countries favor integrity and inspiration.

This research confirmed that cultural influences are essential for effective leadership and that geographically close areas show similarities in the leadership prototype as well as differences to those that are more distant.

Although many studies contributed to better understanding of the relationship between culture and leadership, their degree of generalization is limited. There is no clear evidence on the degree of correlation between culture and the process of leadership, but there are certain indications. We should bear in mind the multitude of factors that influence the style of leadership, such as the personality of a leader, characteristics of the followers, and especially the situational factors. However, current research successfully explain present styles of leadership by characteristics of the culture in which they have been identified as typical. Therefore, all the results of research on this topic can be taken primarily as useful information about typical and acceptable styles in certain cultures.

First of all, it has been identified that the practices of leadership in one culture are not equally effective in other cultures. For example, the approach to leadership used by

effective American. managers need not provide the same effects when applied in some other country. It has been shown that models that promote participatory leadership can be effective for relatively sophisticated workers in developed countries, but less valid for employees in less developed countries. Even in the same country, effective leadership depends on the situation and many other factors. Also, it should be taken into account that culture and values are dynamic and subject to change under the influence of the conditions and the way of living. However, certain leadership styles and practices have been identified as effective and penetrate international borders.

3.Methodology

In order to reach the research goal which is to determine how culture influences leadership in the Balkans, we have focused on the several research questions:
- What are the main features of the Western Balkans countries?
- How does culture reflect to leadership?
- What is a typical profile of a leader in the Balkan cultural environment?
- What are the implications of the existing leader's profile on the development and economic advancement of the society?

In seeking answers to the stated questions we have used comparative analysis of the existing research in culture and leadership with the focus on leadership characteristics.

As a consequence of such research design, the analysis suffers from certain limitations:
- The use of analogy instead of specific research for this region.
- Inability of comparison with other cultures and leadership characteristics in other regions which would require much broader scope of this paper.
- Complexity of the culture and leadership phenomena along with multiple influencing factors.

4.Results and Discussion

Apart from the stated limitations, our analysis showed specific cultural traits of the Western Balkan countries and their influence on the dominant leader's profile.

The Western Balkans is a specific geographical, political and cultural area. Most often this term refers to the former Yugoslav republics, the states created after disintegration of the federal state which lasted 75 years with a long-standing rule of the Communist ideology, which (unlike some other socialist countries) was not imposed from the outside, but was the result of internal acceptance.

Hofstede's research covered the former Socialistic Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, but after the disintegration of the country the author divided data according to the place where the questionnaires were filled in (Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia), so that these countries can be found in new data.

Table 1: Comparative data on cultural dimensions of the former Yugoslav states and the Western European countries adapted by the data from www.**geert-hofstede**.com

Cultural Dimensions	Former Yugoslav States			German countries			Scandinavian countries			Latin-European countries		Anglo-Saxon countries		Iberic countries	
	Serbia	Croatia	Slovenia	Germany	Austria	Switzerland	Sweden	Denmark	Finland	France	Italy	Great Britain	Ireland	Spain	Portugal
PDI	86	73	71	35	11	34	31	18	33	68	50	35	28	57	63
IDV	25	33	27	67	55	68	71	74	63	71	76	89	70	51	27
MAS	43	40	19	66	79	70	5	16	26	43	70	66	68	42	31
UAI	92	80	88	65	70	58	29	23	59	86	75	35	35	86	104
LTO	52	58	49	83	60	74	53	35	38	63	61	51	24	48	28

The data shows that there is almost a negligible difference in the dimensions of the culture in the former Yugoslav [13]. It is interesting that Slovenia which was the first ex-Yugoslav republic that joined the European Union has much more in common with Croatia and Serbia, than with the Germanic countries with which it borders, even though such prejudices can be often heard.

The unique combination of extremely high power distance and uncertainty avoidance is typical for all Western Balkan countries, with low individualism and masculinity and the mean value in terms of long-term orientation. It may be noted that that is the combination which House et al. referred to as unfavorable for the success of economic and social development [14]. If we analyze the characteristics of these dimensions, we can see that that is a bad combination

for the development of democratic values and market economy. A significant effect of power distance and collectivism in economic development is particularly highlighted in this research.

Huge power distance as a cultural dimension which most differentiates cultures of the Western Balkans in comparison with other European countries influences the leadership style so that it generates autocratic and authoritarian leadership. In the huge power distance, changes in the power structure do not mean new distribution of power, but personal change of the power holders, who practice the same patterns of behavior. This dimension of culture is reflected in tolerating the practice of placing powerful individuals above the law and other norms, which deteriorates the system and creates a very favorable environment for bribery and corruption.

Everyday corruption scandals in these countries show that abuse of power is present to a large extent in all spheres of life, and is especially prominent in the privatization process, allowing the connections between politics, the economy and crime.

If we take a look at the corruption index, which is followed up and published by Transparency International, it can be seen that the index of corruption in some countries is proportional to power distance index.

The high level of **uncertainty avoidance** is a dimension of culture which is blocking changes in a society. It is characteristic that societies with high uncertainty avoidance are not ready to undergo gradual change. Changes in these countries are abrupt and revolutionary. This dimension of culture influences the behavior of leaders by encouraging defensive behavior in order to maintain the position and privilege. It also influences behavior of the subordinates in the way that they accept the great power of a leader and preserve the status quo.

The high level of **collectivism** in cultures of the Western Balkans has negative effects on motivation for achievement, encourages social motives and does not encourage orientation to results, which is the basis of efficient and competitive economic system. When it comes to behaviour of employees, individualistic cultures encourage individual responsibility, while collectivist cultures put loyalty and obedience in the foreground.

The presented data show that countries of the Western Balkans have relatively poor expression of **masculinity**, which means that emotions overrule the ratio. This characteristic is reflected in the leadership so that the leader is primarily expected to maintain good relationships (not results) and to take care of the followers (employees). Greater degree of expression of female values (femininity) in leadership is reflected in the relationships within the group (aspiration for harmony).

As it can be noted, all of these dimensions are interacted and express the basic premises of a society. Hofstede's studies have shown that these dimensions have a crucial impact on the leadership and decision-making, motivation, control, and overall economic activity.

From these characteristics of the culture of the Western Balkans, we can see that this is a culture that does not have a good basis for economic prosperity. Since leadership expresses cultural dimensions, it can be stated that the leadership in the region of the Western Balkans is not an incentive for economic prosperity.

5.Profile of a leader at the Western Balkans

If we take into account that previous studies proved relationship between cultural dimensions and the leadership styles, then we can assume from the characteristics of the culture of the Western Balkans what could caracterize the leadership in this region.

The prominent dimension of power distance refers to the tendency to authoritarian leadership. At the same time this cultural dimension refers to the acceptance of this style of leadership by the followers. The leader is expected to take decisions alone, to control and sanction, and to have absolute power and authority. It is often an open way to the abuse of power, corruption and orientation primarily to personal interests rather than the interests of the organization or society. Therefore, the struggle for the power that is going on through political or party channels is actually the fight for their own benefits and enrichment. In these societies, the change of authorities means only personnel changes and taking over power by the other person, while patterns of behavior usually remain the same. The leader in such societies is a person who is expected to solve the problems of the followers, and expects the followers to be obedient and loyal. Knowledge is not valued in such a culture, but confidence and personal position one occupies in relation to the leader. It encourages nepotism, which is very prominent in this area.

According to these studies, other characteristic of the culture of the countries of the Western Balkans is uncertainty avoidance. This dimension is reflected in the leadership in the way that it generates defending mechanisms of behavior. The leaders are primarily concerned how to strengthen and secure their position and in order to achieve that in a high power distance culture they should be supported by those who are more powerful than them. That generates creeps and building up personal networks based on service and counter-service, which often lead to corruption. In addition, this dimension of culture encourages bureaucratic regulations as a support for security, although that regulation is applied selectively due to the impact of high power distance.

Collectivism, as the third emphasized dimension of culture of the Western Balkans, reflects on the leadership by putting in the foreground membership to the group in relation to the efficiency of task execution. Therefore, in these cultures political parties influence employment and functioning of economic organizations, especially public administration. In contrast to the individualistic cultures, in which the leaders expect high results (performance orientation), in these societies the leaders are expected to demonstrate social sensitivity, i.e. maintenance of "peace at home."

Although in the countries of the Western Balkans female values (femininity) are somewhat more pronounced than the male ones, in combination with other distinct dimensions they have impact on the leadership style. While the "male" (masculinity) societies value achievement, success, and visible results, female appreciate "clean face". It directs the behavior of the leaders towards the care for the formal reputation and personal results, as opposed to the male cultures in which the leader is like any other man, confirmed by actual results.

These assumptions are only partially confirmed in experiments in the countries of the Western Balkans, for the simple reason that research in this area is very scarce and large studies did not include this area. Thus, the GLOBE study [7] focused more on regions rather than individual countries, and from it we can only indirectly infer on

cultural influences on leadership in the Western Balkans. The closest is the leadership style of Eastern Europe. It is characterized by autonomous and defensive leadership, and the least prominent is participative leadership,

One of the most important and also the first studies of the impact of culture on the leadership in the Western Balkans is the research by Humans Synergistics [15], the consulting firm that deals with research on the effectiveness of leadership in relation to the cultural values and assumptions, conducted three years ago in Serbia. In the survey that involved a sample of 107 companies and 859 individual respondents the original questionnaire was used to determine organizational culture (OCI), which is an integral part of the Human Synergistics integrated diagnostic system for individual, group and organizational development. OCI questionnaire measures twelve different cultural norms, which are organized in three basic styles derived from three types of cultures:

- **Constructive cultures**, encourage interaction among members and access to tasks in a way that will help them meet the needs of a higher order – *needs to satisfy* (it includes achievement, self-actualization, humanistic-encouraging culture and friendliness)**.**
- **Passive / defensive culture** assume that members of the society should interact with *others* in the defensive ways that will not harm their *safety* (this includes acceptance, conventional, dependent culture and avoidance).
- **Aggressive / defensive culture** expects the members to approach the performance of tasks in a penetrating way so as to protect their status and security (this includes opposition culture, mode, competitiveness and perfectionism).

It was assumed that the types of culture measured by the OCI questionnaire have a direct influence on the activities of the members and the functioning of the organization.

As an ideal culture, the respondents in Serbia stated predominantly constructive culture, with a moderate presence of aggressive / defensive styles and the absence of passive / defensive styles [15]. The ideal culture is usually a very good indicator of social values that are currently present in the environment of the organization. Compared with other countries, in Serbia a somewhat aggressive behavior is considered desirable, but the preferable culture is constructive, with moderate presence of aggressive / defensive styles and minimal presence of passive / defensive styles. This study showed that there are big differences among the preferred and dominant style of leadership in Serbia. The current culture in Serbia is characterized by pronounced aggressive / defensive styles, and passive / defensive, while constructive styles are not present enough. Amongthe aggressive defensive styles, the more prominent are opposition and perfectionist styles. In opposition style, confrontation and negativism are dominant. Employees are critical and opposed to the ideas of others which cause unnecessary conflict and failure in solving problems. In perfectionist style, preseverance and hard work are appreciatedalthough the employee may lose themselves in details. The most prominent expectations bythe workers are to be persistent, work hard and work long hours, be able to

work independently, in a competent way, indicate the shortcomings, be objective, and look for errors to correct them.

The dominant presence of passive / defensive styles can be explained by the influence of collectivism, high power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and female values that characterize the culture of Serbia. Insufficient presence of constructive styles indicate the need to harmonize culture and leadership styles in managing change that have occurred in the economy in recent decades and require a high degree of ability to adapt not only by organizations, but also by individuals and national cultures.

In addition to the survey by Human Synergistics [15], the relationship between the leadership and culture in Serbia was researched by Janićijević [10], who concludes that Serbian national culture has the following implications on the leadership style:

- The tendency towards authoritarian and benevolent leadership style due to the high power distance. The leader is not inclined to involvement (participation) of employees in decision making, but is expected to look after their interests.
- The relationship between leaders and employees has an emotional component with very strict control and intensive communication at the same time.
- The eligibility of the abuse of power if the leader is successful.
- The tendency towards creating harmony in relationships rather than creating results. The leader must be persuasive to be guided by social interests and goals.
- The contradictory impact of high power distance, which directs leaders to be aggressive, decisive and quick on the contrary to female values.

This profile may be characteristic for the other countries of the Western Balkans. Since there is no data on possible similar studies in other countries of the Western Balkans, and as it was confirmed in the aforementioned research that the characteristics of culture are similar, it can be assumed that all these countries would be characterized by a similar leader profile. In short, it is an unconstructive profile of leadership, which is not focused on results but on maintaining their own power and personal interests, or welfare of a small circle of followers who support the leader.

6. Conclusion

Based on current knowledge about the relationship between culture and leadership, we have come to a conclusion that there is a high degree of interdependence between culture and leadership. Since leadership means primarily a model of behavior and attitude towards the followers, in this process the adopted models of behavior become prominent and are transferred, as well as values, beliefs and the ways in which decisions are made acquired in the environment and characteristic for a particular culture.

Research on the impact of culture on economic success of a society shows that the characteristics of a culture are very important for social and economic prosperity. Considering

Paper ID: SEP14509

2031

the relationship between certain dimensions of culture and leadership styles, it has been found that certain cultural clusters have similar characteristics of leadership. This stems from similar mental models that are the result of common experience in solving problems.

Although we do not have more recent systematic research of culture of the Western Balkans, we can, based on the existing research and analogous reasoning, determine how this cultures contains a combination of high power distance, high uncertainty avoidance, collectivism and predominantly female values (feminism) as dimensions which do not promote economic efficiency and effectiveness.

Typical dimensions of culture in the Western Balkans are also expressed through the leadership style. Our analysis has shown that this style is characterized by aggressiveness, autocracy, striving towards centralization, control, bureaucracy and focus on relationships rather than on results. That was partially confirmed by the existing research on leadership and culture in this area. These qualities of leadership do not meet the requirements of the modern organizations, especially high technology organizations nor the high quality requirements and efficiency in the global competitive environment.

Existing studies have shown that the perceptions of an ideal and present style of leadership in this area are completely different, and that the strongest leadership profiles in this region are far from being desirable and constructive in terms of stimulating faster economic growth.

Since the culture stabilizes and "cements " patterns of behavior and changes much more slowly than the modern world, globalization processes put certain requirements in front of all economies in relation to the competitiveness and efficiency, and it would be useful to identify to what extent the existing models of leaders behavior in the Western Balkans are rational with respect to these requirements.

This article opens questions of how to apply the current results of the culture studies. It provides a challenge to future researcher to look into the needs and possibilities of matching leadership characteristics of certain culture to global business requirements.

References

[1] Fukuyama, F. *Trust. The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity,* Hamisch Hamilton, London, 1995
[2] Lukes, S. *Power,* London, MacMillan, 1974
[3] Hofstede, G. *Culture's Consequences,* SAGE Publications, Beverly Hills, 1994
[4] Northouse, P.G. *Leadership-theory and practice*, Datastatus, (Serbian Edition), Belgrade, 2008, p. 210
[5] Shein, E. *Organizational Culture and Leadership,* Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992
[6] Hofstede, G. *Culture's Consequences,* SAGE Publications, Beverly Hills, 1980
[7] The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies: *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations*, Sage, 2004
[8] Pržulj, Ž. *Business, Culture and Ethics,* Saarbrucken, Lambert Publishing, 2012, p. 28
[9] Blake, R.R. & Mouton, J. S. *The Managerial Grid*, III, Houston, TX; Gulf Publishing Company, 1985
[10] Janićijević N. *Organizational Behaviour,* Datastatus, (Serbian Edition) Belgrade, 2008, p. 356
[11] Dofman, P.W. et al. „Leadreship and Cultural Variation: The Identification of Culturally Endorsed Leadership Profiles", In: House at al., *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: The GLOBE study of 62 societies,* Sage, 2004
[12] Brodbeck et al. „Cultural Variation of Leadership Prototypes Across 22 European Countries". *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* 73, 2000
[13] Hofstede, G. Images of Europe: Past, Present and Future, in Warner M., Joynt P.: *Managing Across Cultures*, Thompson, 2002
[14] House, R. et al. *Culture, Leadrship, and Organizations- The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies*, Sage Publications, 2004, p. 38
[15] Human Synergistics: *Study in Organizational Culture in Serbia,* 2011

Author Profile

Živka Pržulj, PhD, is a full professor at Faculty for Banking, Insurance and Finances, Union University in Belgrade, Serbia. Her specialty area of research and interest are Human Resources Management, Organizational Culture, Organizational Behavior and Business Ethic.

Svetolik Kostadinović, PhD, is a full time professor at Alfa University, Serbia. His core areas of research and interest are related to international business law, development strategy, public service sector and management. In parallel with the career of a university professor and has built a successful business career