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# The Impact of Diverse National Values on Strategic Investment Decisions in the Context of Globalization

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**ABSTRACT** This study examines the effect of diverse national values on strategic investment decision (SID) making in the context of industry globalization. Whilst previous single country studies of strategic decision making have highlighted the effect of variables such as uncertainty, environmental stability, competition intensity and organizational position, we argue that diverse national values are also critical, albeit tempered by convergence pressures arising from globalization. Our incipient model, recognizing research from both these fields, is explored in closely matched automotive components businesses, one German, one American, one British and one Japanese. Transcripts of interviews focusing on recent SIDs were analysed against protocols generated from the alternative propositions. We found considerable diversity associated with differences in national values in respect to techniques, but also some points of convergence in respect to other process aspects driven by common industrial globalization pressures.

**KEY WORDS** • globalization • national values • strategic investment decisions

## Introduction

Single country research on strategic decisions has highlighted the effect of a number of process variables. Research into the rational-

ity or otherwise of such decisions has highlighted the effect of bounded perceptions and conflicting goals especially in bureaucracies (Allison, 1971; Carter, 1971; Cyert and March, 1963). This may result in 'satisficing',

'solution selling' or failure avoidance behaviour, and decision processes may lack order or rational structure (Anderson, 1983; Mintzberg et al., 1976; Nutt, 1984). Some procedures may induce 'group think' (Janis, 1982), whilst recognized team roles (such as devil's advocates) may promote higher quality decisions (Schweiger et al., 1986, 1989; Schwenk, 1988). It has been found in practice that many executives combine rationality with a good measure of intuition (Frederickson, 1985). Such effects may vary depending on seniority (Isenberg, 1984), CEO personalities and industry (Hambrick, 1981; Hambrick and Mason, 1984; Hitt and Tyler, 1991), while conditions of financial stress (Hambrick and D'Aveni, 1992) and faster moving environments may call for speedier decisions (Eisenhardt, 1990, 1992). Such research has been well surveyed, summarized and discussed (Eisenhardt and Zbaracki, 1992; Noorderhaven, 1995).

A number of researchers have focused on strategic investment decisions (SIDs), as the point at which decisions are effectively 'embedded' in terms of resource commitments (Ghemawat, 1991), and have confirmed similar findings (Butler et al., 1993). SID studies also provide guidance on the interface between strategy and finance (Oldcorn and Parker, 1996). Strong financial orientation may lead to firms failing to consider 'downside scenarios' (Barwise et al., 1986, 1989); while diversified companies appear to exhibit different styles affecting the relative influence of strategy and finance (Goold and Campbell, 1987). Other researchers (Berg, 1963; Bower, 1971; Kennedy and Sugden, 1986; King, 1975; Klammer, 1972; Klammer and Walker, 1984) have provided specific details of financial approaches and techniques employed in investment decisions more generally.

Whilst these studies have highlighted differences in strategic investment decision procedures, they have not examined how these might vary between countries resulting in

calls for more internationally based research (Bower, 1998). Separately, however, the extent and nature of diversity or convergence in the way that major investment decisions are made is a long-standing issue of significant interest (see, for example, Child, 1981) but remains unresolved. It is likely that many of the underlying beliefs and perceptions which may lead to different strategic approaches will be influenced by values, which themselves have been found to vary between countries (Hofstede, 1980, 1991, 1999, 2001; Schein, 1985). On the other hand, globalization pressures in the context of increasingly 'professionalized' managerial practices may have resulted in convergence.

This study brings these perspectives together to explore the issue of convergence and diversity in managers' processes of making strategic investment decisions (SIDs). It does this by examining the practices adopted by managers of similar businesses within a single mature and highly globalized industry, automotive components, in four different national contexts, Germany, the United States, Japan and the United Kingdom. First, the arguments for expecting convergence and diversity in SID processes are presented. Three aspects of SID processes are distinguished: how radical they are; what techniques are employed; and their process depth. These are then framed within an overall model in which alternative hypotheses of globalization and diversity in SID processes will be examined. Detailed alternative propositions are then made for each aspect concerning possible areas of potential diversity that might be expected should pre-dispositions due to national values, found in a-priori empirical research, dominate the process. A particular research method developed to explore these within a highly mature and globalized industry is outlined and findings from this industry are matched against the alternative propositions. The article concludes with an assessment both of the relative influences on strategic

investment decision processes and of the sources of globalization pressure.

## **Global Convergence and Diversity**

### ***The Case for Convergence***

A strong argument has been made for expecting global uniformity in the managerial processes of decision making. Pressures of internationalization and globalization are said to have resulted in the convergence of managerial cultures around the world. Organizations also appear to have become increasingly alike, especially in industrial sectors characterized by international exchange and where businesses operate relatively independently of national context, (Lammers, 1990; Lammers and Hickson, 1979).

Convergence towards international industry perspectives may have been helped by the common use of English based technical languages. Two decades ago, Burrell and Morgan (1979) noted how the 'normative strategy' business language actively disseminated by national and international business schools, has become a widely accepted framework for strategy discussion. These institutions, with a predisposition to teaching an approach to business developed in the United States in the post-war period, have been powerful agents for spreading these ideas. In Cohen's (1988) unusual but broadly valid example INSEAD alumni were found to have an effective mechanism for reaching the top: the methods they proposed yielded a 'gloss of international competence', which their colleagues recognized as 'superior perception' (Cohen, 1988). An international management class may have evolved with similar perspectives and ideologies.

Industrial globalization also generates background pressures for convergence in strategy processes (Gordon, 1991). Scale economies, allied with global technological

advances, can drive industrial concentration and integration and world-wide benchmarking of operational standards and managerial practices (Womack et al., 1990). Globalization of markets generates common customers worldwide, with identical service demands and quality and cost priorities. Competitors and suppliers may become similar worldwide, and capital market globalization may mean the same or similar financial stakeholder demands (McTaggart et al., 1994; Rappaport, 1986). Chief Executives' articulated responses to globalization are often remarkably similar, though they still betray some differences worldwide (Garten, 2002: 71–108). Parallels may be drawn from empirical research into internal organizational structures and processes within multinationals (Bartlett and Ghoshal, 1989; Ghoshal and Nohria, 1993). We would expect those organizations in environments characterized by strong forces for global integration and weak forces for local responsiveness (such as engines for example, Ghoshal and Nohria, 1993: 27) to have adapted internally most to such global pressures.<sup>1</sup>

Such uniformity can especially be expected within a highly mature and globalized industry such as automotive components, the focus of this study. In globalized industries, a number of assumptions with regard to, for example, best management practices, might be expected in the form of 'industry recipes' (Gordon, 1991). The criteria for gaining customers are the same throughout the world, since the customers (vehicle manufacturers and assemblers) source globally on grounds of price and similar technical specifications (Womack et al., 1990; Womack and Jones, 2003). The vehicle components industry and its customer industry are global and, in an environment of industrial concentration, survival requires beating competitors internationally (Carr, 1990; Carr et al., 1994). The English language, and a specialized engineering language, is used universally. With the background to, and the

purpose of, strategic investment decisions being similar world wide, there is a strong economic and industrial case for expecting convergence in SID processes.

### **The Case for Diversity**

There are also compelling reasons, however, for expecting diversity in SID processes. Duysters and Hagedoorn (2001) examined globalization in the case of computers using just externally available data on the content of firms' strategies and found no evidence of subsequent convergence internationally. In terms of managerial processes, an extensive body of research has compared organizational and managerial styles in different countries (e.g. Hickson, 1993, 1997; Lawrence, 1980, 1996; Lawrence and Edwards, 2000; Ouchi, 1984; Pascale and Athos, 1981), and highlighted differences in management practices. Despite little empirical confirmation or justified understanding of the caricatured differences, many have been widely promoted. Supposedly, for example, Japanese decisions are lengthy, careful and participative, whereas those in the US and UK are rapid, crude and 'top-down' (Gatley et al., 1996; Pascale and Athos, 1981; Whitley, 1996).

Differences in national values have often been suggested as one explanation for differences in managerial practices. Substantial quantitative empirical research into national values (Hofstede, 1980, 1991, 1999, 2001; Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars, 1994; Laurent, 1983), though questioned (Baskerville, 2003; Kuper, 1999; Rokkan, 1996; Scheuch, 1996; Tayeb, 1988; Whitley, 1992), has been empirically corroborated (e.g. Merritt, 2000; Sondegaard, 1994). Managers of different national backgrounds have been found to hold different underpinning values, different assumptions regarding the environment, and different expectations about relationships among people (Schein, 1985). Recent exploratory studies suggest that this has led to different strategy formation pro-

cesses (Harris and Dibben, 1999; Harris and Ghauri, 2000). Schneider (1989) suggested likely differences in respect to handling uncertainty and ambiguity; attitudes towards control over the environment; proactivity vs reactivity; truth and reality (e.g. hard vs soft facts); time; hierarchy (power and status); individualism vs collectivism; and social vs task orientation. Student surveys and country examples also provide some empirical support (Schneider and Barsoux, 2003; Schneider and Mayer, 1991).

Observed differences in managerial behaviour between countries can be the result of many factors and it is dangerous to attribute them all to 'values' or 'culture' (Tayeb, 2001). There is a wide variety of contextual factors that can also contribute to differences in practices between countries (Albert, 1994; Carr and Tomkins, 1998; Guillen, 1994; Hickson and Pugh, 1995; Randlesome et al., 1993). Industrial, organizational, institutional and stakeholder ownership structures and systems vary, while government policies; levels of skill; trading background, and educational, training, and societal structures are rarely the same (Whitley, 1992, 1996, 1999). Sustainable variations in corporate strategy can also be maintained from country to country, even within a globalized industry, as a result of, for example, different unique resources and evolutionary trajectories, different conceptualizations of strategy and industrial success recipes, and different corporate cultures and histories.

### **Research Approach and Propositions for Examination**

SID processes are likely to be influenced by globalization and national values, as outlined above, but also by a multitude of contextual issues. By focusing here on SIDs within similar companies within a single industry, however, as many of these other factors will be kept as constant as possible, so that the influ-

ence of any differences arising from national values will be highlighted.<sup>2</sup> By selecting an industry established as having been in the vanguard of globalization (Carr, 1990, 1993; Nishiguchi, 1994; Womack et al., 1990), we aim to observe the relative weights arising from national values and globalization influences. The arena of SID decision making is broad and for purposes of this analysis three particular aspects are identified, and alternative typologies are distinguished within each. Within each aspect, it can be argued that practice is dominated by international managerial convergence, by national values, or by other factors. Examining the process of globalization or longitudinal developments lies beyond the scope of this article; rather we explore the consequences of this process at more or less a single point of time. In practice companies were able to comment on how this process had in practice influenced their approach, but such reported indications must, of course, be interpreted cautiously.

Detailed propositions concerning SID radicality (defined as the degree to which an SID involved a radical step change, as opposed to a more gradual incrementalist approach), SID process techniques and SID process depth are then generated from the point of view of globalization and the alternative national values perspectives. The globalized views are represented by the approaches that dominate in the teaching of international business schools in each area.

The national values approaches are represented by the expectations derived from previous quantitative evaluations of values in different countries undertaken by Hofstede (1991), Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (1994), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997) and Laurent (1983). This article (like other recent contributions, for example, Anakwe et al., 2000; Bowman et al., 2000; Lau and Ngo, 2001; Lee et al., 2000; Li et al., 2001; Manev and Stevenson, 2001; Steensma et al., 2000) makes no claim as to what this 'values' data represents. Clearly

culture is a more complex issue than can simply be captured in any numerical data (D'Iribarne, 1997). Yet we treat them as interesting findings on differences that are empirically consistent and on which behavioural propositions can reasonably be based. Table 1 summarizes the values that these researchers (in their own terms) have found associated with individuals in the four countries in this study, with the expectations concerning each aspect of SID processes that can be derived from them. In instances where the research evidence from the a-priori research appears to be inconsistent, no firm propositions are generated and this is noted. In most areas, however, reasonable propositions as presented next can be argued from the array of a-priori research as to how SID process behaviour could be expected to vary between the four countries.

### **Propositions: Strategic Investment Decision Radicality**

Two alternative perspectives on radicality are distinguished. One is rooted in the traditional 'decision' view of strategy formation (Andrews, 1980). This traditional view of strategy, which reflects strategy's military heritage (Evered, 1983), sees the strategist's role as analytical. A rational analysis based on good knowledge about current and future circumstances and sound economic analysis (Porter, 1980) is the aim and dispassionate decisions are made that are pursued with vigour. This approach is not now universally accepted as being the basis for strategic development and an incremental approach has been suggested as a better norm for strategic investment decisions (Lindblom, 1959; Pettigrew, 1987; Quinn, 1980). Newer perspectives, such as the resource based view and the core competence perspective, emphasize the role of historically accumulated intangible resources. They also recommend a managed blend between incrementalism and radicalism, and suggest that such integration has become a globalized norm for profes-

sional practice (Grant, 1991; Hamel and Prahalad, 1994; Prahalad and Hamel, 1990; Wernerfelt, 1984).

The majority of the values studies in Germany and especially Japan, however, point towards incremental rather than radical strategic moves<sup>3</sup> (Hampden Turner and Trompenaars, 1994; Hickson, 1993, 1997; Hickson and Pugh, 1995; Hofstede, 1999, 2001; Horowitz, 1980; Laurent, 1983; Lawrence, 1980; Lawrence and Edwards, 2000; Lorrinan and Kenjo, 1996; Ouchi, 1984; Pascale and Athos, 1981; Randlesome et al., 1993; Tayeb, 1988; Trompenaars and Hampden Turner, 1997; Womack et al., 1990) (Table 1). These arguments will now be elaborated, with key concepts explained as they arise.

High uncertainty avoidance connotes more conservatism, a stronger respect for rules and order, for seniority, greater company loyalty, less openness to change or to new ideas, as well as greater stress and anxiety in the context of the unfamiliar (Hofstede, 2001: 160–70). High and moderately high figures for Japan and Germany respectively suggest predisposition towards less radical SIDs. Lower scores for status based on achievement as opposed to seniority, for task orientation as opposed to people relationships, again especially in Japan, have similar effects. Collective or communitarian (as opposed to individualist) values<sup>4</sup> reinforce the influence of wider stakeholder interests (further emphasized by co-determination as in Germany, Whitley, 1992, 1999) and of group decision making as further emphasized by the Ringi system in Japan (Ouchi, 1984; Pascale and Athos, 1981). As well as encouraging participation, this would be expected to encourage more incrementalism and less radical SIDs, especially in Japan.

Long vs short term time horizons represent the willingness to forgo present for future benefits, reflecting societal and religious values (Hofstede, 2001: 360–4; Mamman and Staffa, 1998; Redding, 1990).

This influences company goals and requirements for financial analysis, potentially allowing bolder long-term strategic investments, though perhaps also facilitating gradual adjustments and incrementalism. Radically inclined chief executives might also be empowered by Japan's high power distance index, or spurred on by its high masculinity index. The former connotes unequal dispersion of power, respect for those in power and little for those who might question decisions (Hofstede, 2001: 96–108); the latter connotes greater ego and personal achievement orientation (Hofstede, 2001: 298–330).

Overall, however, we would expect the net effect of such Japanese values to yield more incrementalist strategic decision making, in contrast to the UK and the USA (see also Lawrence, 1996) where most data on values points towards greater radicality being welcomed. Germany appears half way towards the Japanese position on most measures, but lower power distance and masculinity indices might further encourage incrementalism.

### **Propositions: Strategic Investment Decision Techniques**

Specific techniques employed in the process of investment appraisal may also vary and here two alternative typologies of investment appraisal were distinguished. The first encompasses the financially based capital budgeting tools explored in depth in Carr et al. (1994) and Carr and Tomkins (1998), including discounted cash flow, internal rate of return, return on capital employed and return on equity.<sup>5</sup> The second is the use of more 'strategic' analytical procedures, such as value chain analysis, cost driver analysis, and competitive advantage analysis (Porter, 1980, 1985; Shank, 1996). These can help to base decisions on notions of longer-term competitive advantage. In the environment of dynamic shifts in the industrial structure of the automotive component industry on a

global scale, but also of a world-wide capital market where financial stakeholders are increasingly alike, a globalized norm for techniques would include developed use of both the financial and strategic approaches.

The propositions generated from the different values studies are remarkably consistent (Table 1). Japanese perceptions around truth/reality reflect less faith in principles held universally applicable and more emphasis on factors particular to contexts usually perceived as specific and unique ('particularism'). Collective and communitarian values, greater people orientation and long-termism might similarly play down any influence of any universally applicable financial techniques, aimed at prioritizing the short-term aims of shareholders over those of other broader constituencies. Conversely these values, together with uncertainty avoidance, would probably favour strategic orientation and planning. It is though conceivable that strategic planning techniques might be perceived as unduly 'universalist', or that greater hierarchy, masculinity, and status orientation might give rise to more intuitive, less technique orientated approaches to SIDs. Such a qualification applies less to Germany, but in most other respects it again seems half way towards the Japanese orientation. Hofstede (1999: 388) argues that, although strategic management is taught in countries like Germany with high uncertainty avoidance, its recommendations are rarely followed, because in such a culture it is seen as the top managers' role to remain involved in daily operations (Horovitz, 1980). Values findings for the UK and the US all point to the financial approach being favoured, though usage of strategic planning techniques might also be encouraged by universalism.

### **Propositions: Strategic Investment Decision Process**

Two contrasting notions of strategic management processes may be distinguished.

The top-down process (reflecting the traditional strategic management perspective of 'generalship') requires the firm's top managers to set directions and make major decisions, which are then implemented by staff and workers (Andrews, 1980; Evered, 1983). An alternative 'teamwork' process involves managerial approaches to integrate different levels of the organization and different skills, to achieve group-based and agreed courses of action (Baden-Fuller and Stopford, 1992; Pettigrew and Whipp, 1991). Such integrative processes attempt to encompass the perspectives and approaches of different functional specialists, such as finance, marketing, production and personnel. Business schools and textbooks now heavily promote the notion of team-based, integrative, thinking and the notion of top-down decision processes has long since disappeared within leading global firms.

Overall, the propositions from the national values research are mixed (Table 1). The propositions for Japan are mainly towards team-based integrative approaches, but the higher hierarchy orientation, and status shown by ascription rather than achievement, might also tend to indicate a preference for top-down processes. A similar pattern of propositions arises for Germany, where all the values data indicates an integrative teamwork approach. A desire for thoroughness could be expected to arise from Germany's and Japan's high level of uncertainty avoidance and their relative long-termism, and this thoroughness could be associated with greater integrative, team-based, analysis. For the United Kingdom and United States, the balance of propositions is towards top-down approaches, though achievement and egalitarian orientations might also indicate team-based integrative approaches.

### **Research Methodology**

This study is exploratory and is attempting to bring about the development and refinement

**Table 1** Values linked to different countries and propositions concerning processes

Values Areas & Criteria:	GERMANY		JAPAN		UK		US	
	Values	Propositions	Values	Propositions	Values	Propositions	Values	Propositions
<i>Hierarchy Relationships:</i>								
Power Distance Index (1)	Low (35)	} Incremental Integrative	High (54)	} Radical Top-down	Low (35)	} Incremental Integrative	- / - (40)	} Integrative but occasionally radical?
Egalitarianism/Hierarchy (2)	Egalitarian		Hierarchy		Egalitarian			
<i>Time Scales:</i>								
Long/Short Time Horizon (1)	- / - (39)	} Incremental Integrative	Long (80)	} Incremental Integrative	Short (31)	} Radical Top-Down	Short (29)	} Radical Top-Down
Long/Short Future Horizon (2)	- / -		Long		Short			
HRM Long/Short-Term Horizon (3)	Long	} Strat. Planning	Long	} Strat. Planning	Short	} Financial	Short	} Financial
<i>Work Focus:</i>								
Masculinity vs Femininity (1)	- / - (69)	} Radical Top-Down	High (95)	} Radical Top-Down	- / - (66)	} Radical Top-Down	- / - (62)	} Radical Performance
Relationship/Performance Orient'n (2)	- / -		- / -		- / -			
Company just a set of tasks? (2)	(41)	} Top-Down Financial	(29)	} Financial	(55)	} Financial	(74)	} Financial
Task/Person Orientation (2)	- / -		Social org		Fairly task		Task	
<i>Source of Status:</i>								
Achieved/Ascribed Status (2)	Achieved	} Integrative	Ascribed	} Top-Down	Achieved	} Integrative	Achieved	} Integrative
Status by achievement vs age (2)	(58)		(42)		(60)		(63)	
Societal Role (3)	Low	- / -	Low	Performance				
<i>View of Uncertainty:</i>								
Uncertainty Avoiding/Neutral (1)	- / - (65)	} Integrative Strat Planning	Avoids! (92)	} Incremental Integrative Strat Planning	Low (35)	} Radical Top-Down Financial	- / - (46)	} Radical Top-Down Financial
Uncertainty Avoidance (2)	Low		- / -		Low		- / -	
<i>Individualism vs collective</i>								
Individual vs collective (1)	- / - (67)	} Broadly Integrative Strat Planning	Collect. (46)	} Strongly Integrative Strat Planning	Individ. (89)	} Radical Top-Down Financial	Individ. (91)	} Radical Top-Down Financial
Indiv vs communitarian (2)	- / - (67)		Comm. (50)		Indiv. (74)		Indiv. (79)	
<i>Ways of Thinking:</i>								
Universalism/Particularism (2)	Universalist	} Broadly Integrative Strat Planning	Particularist	} Intuitive/ Integrative Strat Planning	Universalist	} Top-Down Financial	Universalist	} Top-Down Financial
No exceptions based on relationships	(94)		(56)		(84)		(95)	
Analysing vs synthesizing (2)	24	8	33	40				
Analytical/Integrational Thinking (2)	Integrational	Integrational	Analytical	Analytical				

Source: (1) Hofstede (2001) (2) Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (1994) (3) Laurent (1983).

- / - Values data indicates a position at neither end of the worldwide range on criteria. Several specific indices provided in brackets in direction indicated.

of conceptual linkages around complex subjective phenomena. To achieve this, qualitative examination and analysis of strategic investment decisions in matched, comparable, businesses in each country studied was considered to be the most appropriate research approach (Eisenhardt, 1990). It allows access to what Pettigrew (1987: 78–87) has called the ‘back stage of decision making’ within which the ‘theories in use’ reside. By providing ‘a means of generalizing about processes managers get involved in’ (Watson, 1994: 7), generalization comes from the theoretical developments enabled by the study (Yin, 1984, 1993).

National values and globalization are not the only variables bearing upon strategic decision making processes: a multitude of other contextual factors, already discussed, has direct and indirect effects, as illustrated in Figure 1 (p. 92). Full segregation of all these influences (in order to separate the effects of national values and globalization) is clearly impossible. Three elements of the research design, however, address this issue as much as possible. First, close matching of the case companies selected for study (as far as is possible within the realities of a global industrial sector) make them as equivalent as possible (Eisenhardt and Zbaracki, 1992). We experienced constraints on timing. Ideally all SIDs would be simultaneous, but our criteria necessarily allowed companies to choose investments that they regarded as most significant both in terms of value and of longer-term strategic implications. Executives had to be knowledgeable about the SID and some very recent projects were excluded for reasons of confidentiality. Our own research grants also dictated research visits to these different countries in different years. Thus the Japanese SID decision discussed was four years earlier than others (as shown in Table 2), though they were able to update us to the same time period in terms of their overall approach. Further, the stipulation that companies select the SID considered

by them to have been the most strategic inherently rules out matching on the basis of type of investment. Another unavoidable constraint was that companies selected key interviewees on the basis of who was available and knowledgeable in respect of this particular SID. We attempted to minimize any interviewee level/functional position bias by always requesting top level CEO access, or the next best person in respect to overall strategic direction, *and* someone as senior as possible from the finance function to ensure adequate and detailed understanding of financial techniques. Nevertheless, we acknowledge some degree of inherent bias resulting from both the type of investment and of interviewee position and provide full details in Table 2. Second, the industry was selected for study *because* of its mature globalization (Carr, 1990, 1993; Womack et al., 1990) so individual country contextual factors (such as local industrial and institutional structures) are less important. Third, the extensive nature of the interviews within each company enables, as will be seen, the influence of at least some of these contextual factors to be identified (Yin, 1984, 1993).

Co-ordinating executives of SIDs within large vehicle component manufacturers were interviewed (in English at their own business premises) about the processes and techniques they used in actual recent major investment decisions. An assurance of full confidentiality was given and the interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. The German company is here named Deutchcom, the Japanese, Japcom, the UK, Britcom and the US, Americom. Table 2 details the companies examined, the strategic investments involved, and the people interviewed.

Protocol analysis was used to analyse the transcribed interviews and notes. Criteria, or protocols, were developed to interpret and analyse the transcribed data in terms of the notions of globalized processes and national values in the context of the discussions about strategic investment decisions (Ericsson and

**Table 2** Companies examined and strategic investments undertaken

	Deutchcom	Japcom	Britcom	Americom
<i>Ownership</i>	Family	Public	Public	Public
<i>Company details</i>	Large focused automotive parts manufacturer	Large focused automotive parts manufacturer	Industrial conglomerate, with substantial auto-motive parts business	Large focused automotive parts manufacturer
<i>International position</i>	60% German market; 30% of European market; one of world's largest	60% Japan market share, one of world's largest players	UK no. 1, not dominant. Weaker position in Europe. World no. 1 in some sectors.	World no. 1
<i>Main SID discussed</i>	£12m (approx 40% of typical yearly investment budget)	Began <£0.5m with kit plant, £40m 5 yrs later.	£5m (125% of typical yearly investment budget)	£130m
<i>Decision date</i>	1989	1982–85	1989	1990
<i>Main SID purpose</i>	Fully automated, computerized warehouse for JIT & greater responsiveness	US market entry, supported by major new plant	Plant modernization as part of domestic joint venture for niche opportunity mainly in UK.	New plant supporting new product, linked to domestic joint venture for domestic & internat. markets
<i>Interviewees</i>	Chief executive; head of investment appraisal and strategic planning	Strategic planning director	Bus. dev. director & former strategic planning director of parent. Fin. Director of subsid involved	Fin. exec. (reporting to VP, Worldwide Ops) in coordinating SID of project; strat planning/ops exec.; man. acc't involved
<i>Subsidiary SIDs to provide update/ comparison</i>	Overseas acquisition	US plant upgrade	Rationalization & internationalization process decisions; & £12.5m customer JV from which this SID arose	Original JV
<i>Transcript length</i>	25,000 words	13,000 words	93,000 words	27,000 words

Simon, 1985). The specific propositions (developed from previous research and detailed earlier) concerning how Deutchcom, Japcom, Britcom and Americom might be expected to process strategic investment decisions were then compared with interview transcripts and notes separately and independently by two researchers. This approach would seem to be as rigorous as possible within the constraints of the research

objectives, which included exploring real important investment decisions on-site. This precluded the approach of some psychological and organizational studies, with executives observed in action, with minute-by-minute analysis of thought processes (e.g. McAuley et al., 1998). Data was triangulated both to published records, where available, and to a longitudinal study of these companies that is also being undertaken.

## Findings

Table 3 presents a summary of the findings from the four case companies alongside tabulated indications of the propositions generated from the globalized management and national values points of view. Indicative quotations and evidence is presented in Table 4, for the three areas of strategic investment decision processes, as will next be elaborated.

### **Strategic Investment Radicality**

In all four cases companies blended incrementalism with radicalism. Britcom's SID proved the least radical, confounding predictions: a safe investment, aimed at fast returns from a known market, recognized as offering few prospects or competitive opportunities. Americom's SID was bolder: a new factory based on a new product and slightly more advanced technology, but clearly an extension of existing business, aimed at primarily the same US customers and with risks reduced by joint-venturing with another US company. Short-termist tendencies on these SIDs, especially in the UK, appeared to override any supposition of lower uncertainty avoidance. We did note that Britcom and Americom had been more radical than either Deutchcom or Japcom in reshaping their business portfolios in the 1960s and 1970s and they were still more active in this respect. However, in recent years the emphasis had switched to prudent re-structuring, constrained by more rigorous assessments of competencies and market positioning in the face of competitive pressures from Germany and Japan, and greater determination to secure financial results.

Deutchcom and Japcom disliked portfolio moves. They appeared largely to follow incremental instincts, in concurrence with the main expectations derived from national values surveys, yet their SIDs were proactive, innovative and highly radical. In both cases, risks were reduced by closer and more

reliable customer relationships. Deutchcom's technological step was the most dramatic advance of all four companies. Japcom's technology was less innovative, but represented a leap from the original equipment to the after-market, a new product and simultaneous entry for the first time into the USA. Japcom's CEO was both visionary and strongly assertive, although executives conceded that this had not always been their strategic style in more recent years. The Japanese hierarchical structure empowered the CEO to act decisively as in this SID, though CEOs usually appeared to prefer recourse to more consensual styles. Deutchcom's CEO typically exercised power and assertiveness but worked closely and consistently with a small team of top professionals (weighted towards engineering and then marketing), aiding radical moves and innovative technology.

Industrial imperatives here appeared to be overriding national values inclinations. In the industrial context of maturity and global concentration, success involved customer responsiveness, operational efficiency, and occasionally more radical, proactive SIDs aimed at staying ahead of requirements. Closer customer relationships in Japan and Germany may have completely offset any expected tendency towards less radicalism.

### **Strategic Investment Decision Techniques**

In contrast to Deutchcom and Japcom, Britcom and Americom placed great weight on financial techniques to ensure that their SIDs contributed to profits that would benefit shareholders, in line with the expectations of the values (and indeed institutional) research. Even though a range of strategic approaches and rituals had been adopted, the financial ratios (return on capital employed [ROCE], return on assets [ROA], payback, and discounted cash flow) predominated the planning process and investment decision (particularly in Britcom). Though

**Table 3** Congruence between propositions and observations

	RADICALITY		TECHNIQUES		PROCESS	
	Radical	Incremental	Financial	Strategic Planning	Top-Down	Team integrative
<i>Germany –</i>						
Global Proposition	+	+	+	+	–	++
Values Proposition	–	+	–	++	–	++
Deutchcom – Observation	++	+	–	++	–	++
Findings from Deutchcom Case Data	Investments are major developments on what is currently done: big investments.		Some minimal incomplete use of financial techniques. Main issues considered unquantifiable. Multiple forms of strategic planning approaches, & views.		Decisions made by all engineers involved, with different perspectives. CEO view important as he is one of the team. ‘Qualitative.’	
<i>Japan –</i>						
Global Proposition	+	+	+	+	–	++
Values Proposition	–	++	–	++	+	+
Japcom – Observation	++	+	–	+	+	+
Findings from Japcom Case Data	Depends on the ownership & the CEO. Follows customers & other firms: big investments in established areas.		Minimal financial analysis. Diverse qualitative & intuitive planning approaches. Each determined by the particular investment proposal being considered.		CEO is at the top of a hierarchy of power. He believes in team-based decisions, with different points of view. ‘Intuitive.’	
<i>UK –</i>						
Global Proposition	+	+	+	+	–	++
Values Proposition	++	–	++	–	+	+
Britcom – Observation	–	+	++	+	+	+
Findings from Britcom Case Data	Evolutionary change to cut costs. Change limited by short payback periods and risk, and the core competence view.		Extensive strategic planning, but it is all driven by and controlled by the financial ratios and numbers.		Multidisciplinary senior management team makes the appraisal & proposal; ultimate decision resides at top. Repeated questioning of assumptions. ‘Financial ratios & numbers.’	
<i>US –</i>						
Global Proposition	+	+	+	+	–	++
Values Proposition	++	–	++	–	+	+
Americom – Observation	+	+	++	++	–	++
Findings from Americom Case Data	Will consider anything if it will pay off & be strategically beneficial. Limited by core competence view & risk assessments.		Extensive strategic planning, & use of financial approaches, being adapted to strategic issues. Strategic making progress over financial, but all has to be ‘objective’.		Multidisciplinary decision team with an open approach. CEO sets overall direction & approach adopted. Analysis to generate an open, ‘objective’ decision.	

Notes: – No proposition/observation ; + Proposition/observation ; ++ Strong proposition/observation.

**Table 4** Indicative evidence and quotations drawn from SID interviews

Orientation	Deutchcom	Japcom	Britcom	Americom
<i>Radicality</i>	‘The development of our market base results primarily from solving technical problems that our customers are interested in.’ As happened on this SID. Almost all development organic; no use of acquisitions or alliances. Diversification rare.	SID responded to Jap customer’s request to follow them to the USA, but necessitated a new product and switching to the aftermarket.	‘My attitude usually is well everything’s up for sale . . . What are the opportunities in the market? You were then saying what do we need to do to become a major player.’	Represented a new product, a new factory to manufacture it, with risk ameliorated through a joint venture with another US major player.
<i>Techniques</i>	No profit calculation was carried out. Key questions were ‘common sense’. ‘Do they [customers] really need it? Either you are an entrepreneur or you are a money owner . . . If it’s not for luxuries you can forget all these [profit] calculations.’  Strategic planning, however, was thorough. Systematic reports (including independent assessments by outside consultants) scored performance against rivals on key competences.	No formal review on this SID. SWOT has been introduced but only since the SID and they do not use Porter or BCG type portfolio techniques. Broad aim profitability within 5 years, break even within 7, but fairly flexible.	‘Portfolio analysis was done internally years ago.’ SID went through formal strategic review, including SWOT and other analyses.  Very detailed and serious financial analysis. High financial hurdle rates on IRR and little flexibility.	SID was triggered by a formal world-wide strategic review. Very detailed strategic and financial analysis, incorporating significant IRR targets. The American culture is we want to ‘make every analysis as accurate as possible’.
<i>Process</i>	CEO dominant internally and subject to few perceived external financial pressures, but nevertheless utilized his team of professional technical and marketing experts.	On this SID ‘the CEO was aggressive enough to adopt that kind of [global] strategy’. But usual process far more consensual.	‘We don’t believe you should completely rely on the sales and marketing guy, nor do we believe you should rely on finance. Each should knit together to make sense.’	‘Operations was driving the analysis to begin with so we got a lot of inputs.’ Team-based approach linked to TQM. ‘This is a massive change.’

ROA hurdle criteria could be lowered for long-term strategic reasons, they rarely were, and never to take them below 15% from the normally required 25%.

Deutchcom and Japcom were strategically rather than financially orientated, financial techniques playing a minimal role. Deutchcom believed that none of the major or important strategic issues could be quantified, so they were not, and historically Japcom had carried out almost no financial analysis. We noted some response more recently to international capital markets, but in Japcom particularly the effect was still fairly minimal. The two companies were beginning to use more financial appraisal techniques within their SID process, but engineers themselves, under the guidance of financial staff typically carried this out, and decisions continued to be based on judgement rather than calculation.

Any influence of formal strategic planning techniques was downplayed by Deutchcom's fairly holistic 'common sense' approach and by Japcom's not entirely dissimilar emphasis on 'intuition'; processes were dominated by orientation to specific customers' schedules and needs, reflecting extremely close relationships. Both companies used strategic planning techniques, but Deutchcom was considerably more analytical and thorough. Deutchcom's included market trends analysis, competitor analysis, core competencies analysis, some portfolio analytical techniques, including professional benchmarking of operations, and reports by outside consultants.

Americom's strategic planning techniques were slightly more sophisticated, even as compared with Deutchcom, and they were taken even more seriously; things could not be left to 'judgement' or 'intuition'. As a result of the United States' heavy analytical and universalistic orientation, there is a belief that everything has to be 'objective'. Instead of accepting 'qualitative' aspects into the process, it was attempting to ensure 'objectivity' by quantifying them all, requiring sophis-

ticated techniques. Strategic and financial analyses were equally serious and were both totally integrated though this could sometimes compromise otherwise desirable strategic objectives (as compared with Deutchcom or Japcom). Such a compromise was even more evident at Britcom. Here strategic planning was only a little less sophisticated than either Americom or Deutchcom, but the process (on this SID) was pre-dominated by financial analysis to an extent that appeared to undermine any real influence from strategic planning. We did, however, note some recent shift with Britcom following Americom towards a financial approach better integrated into more serious and sophisticated strategic planning processes, as both companies sought to contend with increasing global competition as well as pressures from global capital markets.

### **Strategic Investment Decision Processes**

SID processes generally appeared thorough and to involve a good measure of teamwork in all four companies. This was perhaps influenced by intense international competitive pressure faced in this industry, rather precarious survival prospects and the inherent risk of SIDs which seemed to call for cautious approaches even in Britain and the USA, less noted for uncertainty avoidance. The nature of the industry, combined with globalization pressures, tended to override national values orientations. Differences observed were subtle, conforming to propositions with some but not complete closeness.

The observations of management processes for meeting this depth matched the propositions. Deutchcom's process was as predicted for Germany – it was team-based, and thoroughly integrative of views. Important SIDs had to be considered by all the engineers in the area, with their different perspectives and functional specialisms. Finance officers trained engineers to use financial techniques that might help. The

CEO's view was considered to be important, but he exerted his authority so as to empower his highly professional top team. Relationships were close. He evidently wanted and valued their professional opinions. Stable staff positions and unambiguous lines of authority, appeared to reduce any scope for internal political jockeying. The approach was demonstrably thorough, though rather that of an elite group of professionals: there was less evidence of Total Quality Management (TQM) orientation and participation at much lower levels, as compared with Japcom or Americom.

National values research led to an expectation that the hierarchy orientation and ascribed status associated with Japan would lead to some top-down orientation; on the other hand research on decision making (and the Ringi system in particular) led to an expectation of a more participative consensus approach. In fact Japcom's particular SID examined was taken in a much more heavily top-down manner, guided by the CEO's international vision and influenced by his authority, than has usually been the case for its decisions either then or certainly more recently. As discussed in the last section, CEOs at Japcom clearly have the power to influence SIDs directly (as happened here), but ultimately utilize this discretion relatively infrequently (and according to his/her personality). As at Deutchcom, authority appears more usually to be exerted to safeguard a team-based approach, bringing different points of views, and an even wider assurance of consensus and participation.

Americom had moved to a formal Total Quality Management (TQM) approach, adopting almost a formal systems approach to ensuring effective teamwork, which extended to major decisions including this SID examined. Ultimate decision authority had been formally delegated to a ten man, integrative, multidisciplinary, decision team (somewhat larger than Deutchcom's key team). This collected relevant information

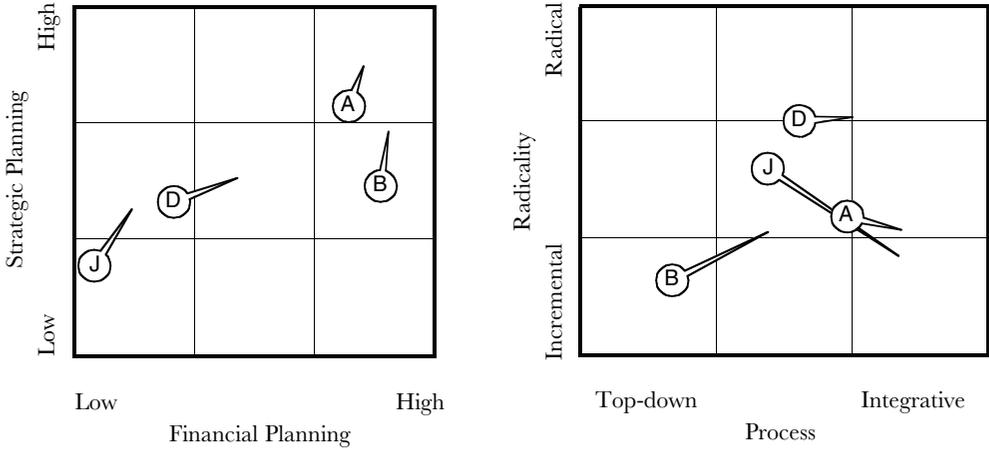
and data, consulted as appropriate, analysed the situation, and made an objective decision whether and how to proceed, based on a free and open exchange of professional views. TQM adoption in turn reflected some 'After Japan' lessons (and interesting reflection of globalization), and specific checks and balances designed to maintain objectivity, but nothing as formal or organizationally extensive as say the Japanese Ringi system. This did not mean, however, that the CEO was unimportant – as in other companies, he had set the nature of decision-making and the overall direction of the firm, though he had less evident direct influence than in Deutchcom or Japcom SIDs.

In Britcom the process was similar (and as at Americom the CEO had exerted little direct influence) but it seemed somewhat shallower. An executive committee at the top of the organization held ultimate decision authority, though senior level multi-disciplinary management teams undertook the appraisal and constructed a proposal. The particular SID examined was largely delegated, with the proviso that head office guidelines (including financial targets) were adhered to. Some recognition at least was afforded to a TQM style philosophy, though power and authority remained clearly there in the background, as was evident from other strategic decisions and one comment: 'Britcom has never been a democracy!'

Thus, even though values differ substantially, there is a common belief in all countries in both hierarchies of power and in team-based integrative decision making. Most surprising was the extensiveness of team-based strategic decisions in the United States, and exercising (just occasionally) of quite top-down strategic decisions in Japan.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Despite the similarities of the companies, the worldwide spread of management techniques and knowledge and pressures from globaliza-



**Figure 1** Directions of change in SID decision processes

tion, the techniques of SID appraisal varied substantially between the four companies in ways fairly well predicted by national values. This is most evident in the case of financial techniques. It is extraordinary (and highly pertinent to the issue of globalization) that it is *these* techniques, which *are* highly amenable to international transfer, that are not universally accepted, to an even greater extent than the difficult to transfer radicality and process aspects of management. This study shows why. These techniques make assumptions about what and whom businesses are for, and about the knowledge that is of use and knowledge that is not. They despise, for example, intuition and value judgements, and laud the apparently objective, referred to as ‘procedural rationality’ (Dean and Sharfman, 1993).<sup>6</sup> Since these assumptions are values, not necessarily right or wrong, and are accepted in some countries and not in others, their general applicability needs to be reconsidered. Such variation in the utilization of analytical techniques confirms and clarifies Schneider’s (1989) expectation of cultural differences (especially as between Japan/Germany and the USA/UK) when

executives handle issues such as truth and reality (hard vs soft facts) and time, which we found particularly reflected in financial targets.

Schneider (1989) also expected differences in terms of how executives handled uncertainty; attitudes to control over the environment; and proactivity vs reactivity. Our distinction of radicality vs incrementalism is closest to the latter, but clearly reflects the first two points in terms of being prepared (or not) to take risks with SIDs so as to manage actively the outside competitive environment, as opposed to responding cautiously through more gradual incremental changes. Both national values literature and that on general decision making led to an expectation of Japan veering towards incrementalism (Mintzberg, 1996a, 1996b; Ouchi, 1984; Pascale, 1984; Pascale and Athos, 1981). To our surprise we found that, although this was often Japcom’s preferred style, their actual SID examined was far more radical in orientation, even as compared with Britcom and Americom.<sup>7</sup> Deutchcom’s SID was similarly radical. Nevertheless we found differences in radicality were subtle. Closer customer

relationships in the context of societal values encouraging trust (Lane and Bachmann, 1996, 1997; Sako, 1992) encouraged Deutchcom's technology jump and Japcom's radical strategic shift. Yet in another sense Americom and Britcom have sometimes (though not on Britcom's SID investigated!) been more radical movers, not merely in response to or dependent upon particular customer linkages.

Schneider (1989) also finally proposed cultural differences in respect to handling issues associated with hierarchy (power and status); individualism and collectivism; and social vs task orientation. Our distinction between top-down vs team integrative strategic decisions covers similar ground and, again, our analysis confirms some significant differences; but these are surprisingly subtle and require cautious interpretation. We noted typical broad differences: the German emphasis on a small top professional team; the extensiveness of consultation in Japan; the surprisingly systematic approach of specially constructed SID project teams in the USA; and the more pragmatic, shallower UK approach. Americom, and to a much lesser extent, Britcom, had adopted 'new' management practices (with team orientations contrary to those expected from the values research) to achieve this. Hierarchies of power were evident in all four companies, but this did mean hierarchies of decision authority. In Japcom and Americom the top executives typically chose delegate decision authority responding to industrial imperatives. Britcom usually did not: British egalitarianism remained within an inflexible power structure dictated by history. However, we also noted similarities and the extent of a CEO's discretion according to circumstances and his/her personality. On the particular SIDs examined, both Americom and Britcom CEOs chose not to exert their authority, whereas (somewhat unusually) Japcom's CEO certainly did, almost to the point of driving it through.

Value-based differences thus remained in evidence, but even on such culturally sensitive process issues we were surprised that global competition, dissemination effects via common customers (such as through TQM 'After Japan' programmes) were leading to some convergence in terms of team work here. Likewise as vehicle suppliers increasingly serve a common set of worldwide car companies, rather than just those say in Japan, the issue of distinctive customer supplier relationships may diminish in importance. This in turn may further diminish those fairly subtle differences observed in terms of radicality.

Overall, therefore, it was not ostensibly easily transferred techniques of appraisal that were similar. Remaining differences in terms of corporate aims and institutional contexts, combined with value differences especially in respect to 'universalism', sustained differences of approach, especially in relation to financial targets and time orientations. It was the areas that *had* to be similar because of industrial pressure arising from *industrial* globalization and trade. Figure 1 summarizes the major differences observed. Adding some historical context, companies also provided some indication of which way they had moved, as we were interested to establish whether things had been different prior to the globalization pressures which they had encountered. The arrows in Figure 1 provide just some indication of their direction of change but clearly require extremely cautious interpretation in the absence of more systematic historical data and interviews. However, all four companies appear to have moved from substantially different starting positions historically, presumably reflecting very different national industrial contexts and national values.

What is clear is that comparative studies of strategic management processes need to take industrial context into close account. Profound differences clearly still exist. Depending upon the industry stage of global-

ization, we can see that certain of these differences have diminished; but we have also identified aspects of strategic decision processes where important differences remain, and where differences in national values cannot realistically be ignored.

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## Notes

- 1 Even in the most globally orientated environment, multinationals may nevertheless adapt their strategies at local level to take into consideration local pressures or constraints, so the situation may be less black or white. However, this article focuses on strategic decisions at HQ level in the countries concerned so internal subsidiary issues will be of less concern as such. It should also be noted that the two studies cited adopt a concept of global integration that is likewise somewhat internally orientated. Strictly speaking, we are concerned with global integration in terms of whether or not industry conditions dictate a globally orientated competitive strategy. Thus Ghoshal and Nohria classify automobiles as a merely 'transnational environment', rather than a 'global environment' as in the case of engines, recognizing greater forces for local responsiveness, but many would see even automobiles as more globally orientated from the viewpoint of competitive strategies, pertinent to SIDs. Kobrin (1991:18) defends the same internally orientated definition of global integration, on the rather contentious grounds that 'At the extreme, a global industry is one in which transnational integration is a requisite of participation rather than a source of incremental competitive advantage'. However his transnational integration index for Motor Vehicles was 0.435, the highest of all industries systematically examined.
- 2 See Berry (1969) for further discussion of the

desirability of functional equivalence as a sampling technique appropriate to cross cultural studies.

- 3 Incremental in the sense of more gradual adaption processes in response to environmental changes, as outlined in Quinn (1980). Mintzberg et al. (1976) take a similar view of strategic approaches often being less pre-deliberated than implied by many 'rational' accounts of strategic planning. We use the term 'radical' in juxtaposition to connote bolder, pro-active, pre-deliberated strategic moves, generally entailing particularly investments and more radical shifts in terms of companies' market positions and modes of competing. There is some potential linkage/overlap between the three areas investigated, as more 'radical' SIDs are sometimes (though not always) associated with greater utilization of formal strategic planning and capital appraisal techniques, and with more top down approaches (as for example with major acquisitions). Incrementalist approaches on the other hand may tend to entail more participation in decision making, and less formal strategic and financial reviews, connotations often suggested by cultural studies of Japanese organizations.
- 4 High individualism scores connote preferences for individual rather than group based decisions, individual rather than collective responsibilities and rewards, respect for autonomy and self starters (Hofstede, 2001: 226–51). Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars' (1993) connotations are similar, but are juxtaposed against a more explicit sense of community obligations.
- 5 Whilst some academics might consider this distinction as part of a broader debate between 'objective/numbers driven' approaches on the one hand and 'subjective judgement/intuitive/holistic' on the other, we see the distinction as more specific relating to the finance function within organizations and as a specific field of academic study (i.e. management accounting). For this reason, great care has been taken to interview financial executives as well as chief executives/strategic planners when investigating each SID.
- 6 This said, differences in respect to strategic planning techniques are a little less pronounced. There is some variation from expectations, but such differences as arise would seem in line with those stressing the

‘universalist’ inclinations of US executives, particularly as compared with those from Japan and Germany.

- 7 This reinforces Mair’s (1999) point that supposed incrementalism in Japanese companies such as Honda is not always so straightforward; at times Honda has exhibited some highly pro-active and visionary strategic moves.

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## Résumé

### L'impact des valeurs nationales sur les décisions d'investissement stratégique en contexte de mondialisation (Chris Carr and Simon Harris)

Cette étude examine l'effet de diverses valeurs nationales sur les décisions d'investissement stratégique (DIS) qui sont prises en contexte de mondialisation dans l'Industrie. Si les études précédentes mono pays sur la prise de décisions stratégiques ont souligné l'effet de variables comme l'incertitude, la stabilité de l'environnement, l'intensité concurrentielle et la position organisationnelle, nous proposons que les diverses valeurs nationales sont aussi des facteurs critiques, bien que leur effet soit modéré par les pressions à la convergence résultant de la mondialisation. Notre modèle s'appuie sur ces deux champs combinés et est appliqué à titre exploratoire dans le secteur des composants automobiles sur un échantillon équivalent composé d'un fournisseur allemand, américain, britannique et japonais. La transcription des entretiens centrés sur les récentes DIS a été analysée à partir d'un protocole fondé sur des propositions alternatives. Des différences considérables associées aux différences de valeurs nationales en matière de techniques ont été identifiées, mais aussi des points de convergence dans d'autres domaines où les pressions de la mondialisation industrielle sont communes.

## 摘要

### 全球化进程中，多远化价值观对策略投资决策的影响

Chris Carr and Simon Harris

这项研究旨在调查在工业全球化背景下，多元化价值观对策略投资决策的影响。以往在单一国家进行的关于策略决策研究，都侧重于不确定性，环境稳定，竞争激烈程度以及企业定位等变数的研究。在此项研究中，即使企业面临由于全球化所产生的文化统一趋势，研究者强调多元文化价值观也是至关重要的要素之一。研究的最初模式，在考虑了以上研究的基础上，在几个十分近似的汽车配件企业中进行了探讨。这些公司包括一个德国公司，一个美国公司，一个英国和一个日本公司。面谈调查主要集中在企业最新的策略投资决策方面。面谈数据在几种可选择的推论的基础上进行了分析。我们发现在有关技术问题上的价值观方面，各国间存在着很大差异。在其它普遍受全球工业化影响的进程方面，各国表现了在某种程度上的“统一”趋势。