Cultures and Organizations

Software of the Mind

GEERT HOFSTEDE AND GERT JAN HOFSTEDE

Introduction: The Rules of the Social Game

11th juror: (rising) "I beg pardon, in discussing . . ."

10th juror: (Interrupting and mimicking) "I beg pardon. What are you so goddam polite about?"

11th juror: (looking straight at the 10th juror) "For the same reason you're not. It's the way I was brought up."

—REGINALD ROSE, Twelve Angry Men, 1955

Twelve Angry Men is an American theater piece that became a famous motion picture, starring Henry Fonda. The play was published in 1955. The scene consists of the jury room of a New York court of law. Twelve jury members who had never met before have to decide unanimously on the guilt or innocence of a boy from a slum area who has been accused of murder. The quote just given is from the second and final act when emotions have reached the boiling point. It is a confrontation between the tenth juror, a garage owner, and the eleventh

juror; a European-born, probably Austrian, watchmaker. The tenth juror is irritated by what he sees as the excessively polite manners of the other man. But the watchmaker cannot behave otherwise. After many years in his new home country, he still behaves the way he was raised. He carries within himself an indelible pattern of behavior.

Different Minds but Common Problems

important

The world is full of confrontations between people, groups, and nations who think, feel, and act differently. At the same time, these people, groups, and nations, just like our twelve angry men, are exposed to common problems that demand cooperation for their solution. Ecological, economic, political, military, hygienic, and meteorologic developments do not stop at national or regional borders. Coping with the threats of nuclear warfare, global warming, organized crime, poverty, terrorism, ocean pollution, extinction of animals, AIDS, or a worldwide recession demands cooperation of opinion leaders from many countries. They in turn need the support of broad groups of followers in order to implement the decisions taken.

Understanding the differences in the ways these leaders and their followers think, feel, and act is a condition for bringing about worldwide solutions that work. Questions of economic, technological, medical, or biological cooperation have too often been considered as merely technical. One of the reasons why so many solutions do not work or cannot be implemented is because differences in thinking among the partners have been ignored.

The objective of this book is to help in dealing with the differences in thinking, feeling, and acting of people around the globe. It will show that although the variety in people's minds is enormous, there is a structure in this variety that can serve as a basis for mutual understanding.

Culture as Mental Programming

Every person carries within him- or herself patterns of thinking, feeling, and potential acting that were learned throughout their lifetime. Much of it has been acquired in early childhood, because at that time a person is most susceptible to learning and assimilating. As soon as certain patterns

of thinking, feeling, and acting have established themselves within a person's mind, he or she must unlearn these before being able to learn something different, and unlearning is more difficult than learning for the first time.

Using the analogy of the way computers are programmed, this book will call such patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting *mental programs*, or, as per this book's subtitle, *software of the mind*. This does not mean, of course, that people are programmed the way computers are. A person's behavior is only partially predetermined by her or his mental programs: she or he has a basic ability to deviate from them and to react in ways that are new, creative, destructive, or unexpected. The software of the mind that this book is about only indicates what reactions are likely and understandable, given one's past.

The sources of one's mental programs lie within the social environments in which one grew up and collected one's life experiences. The programming starts within the family; it continues within the neighborhood, at school, in youth groups, at the workplace, and in the living community. The European watchmaker from the quote at the beginning of this chapter came from a country and a social class in which polite behavior is still at a premium today. Most people in that environment would have reacted as he did. The American garage owner, who worked his way up from the slums, acquired quite different mental programs. Mental programs vary as much as the social environments in which they were acquired.

A customary term for such mental software is *culture*. This word has several meanings, all derived from its Latin source, which refers to the tilling of the soil. In most Western languages *culture* commonly means "civilization" or "refinement of the mind" and, in particular, the results of such refinement, including education, art, and literature. This is culture in the narrow sense. Culture as mental software, however, corresponds to a much broader use of the word that is common among sociologists and, especially, anthropologists;[1] it is this meaning that will be used throughout this book.

Social (or cultural) anthropology is the science of human societies—in particular (although not only), traditional or "primitive" ones. In social anthropology, *culture* is a catchword for all those patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting referred to in the previous paragraphs. Not only activities supposed to refine the mind are included, but also the ordinary and menial

things in life—for example, greeting, eating, showing or not showing feelings, keeping a certain physical distance from others, making love, or maintaining body hygiene.

→ Culture is always a collective phenomenon, because it is at least partly shared with people who live or lived within the same social environment, which is where it was learned. Culture consists of the unwritten rules of the social game. It is *the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category*[3] *of people from others*.[3]

Culture is learned, not innate. It derives from one's social environment rather than from one's genes. Culture should be distinguished from human nature on one side and from an individual's personality on the other (see Figure 1.1), although exactly where the borders lie between nature and culture, and between culture and personality, is a matter of discussion among social scientists.[4]

Human nature is what all human beings, from the Russian professor to the Australian Aborigine, have in common: it represents the universal level in one's mental software. It is inherited within one's genes; again using the computer analogy, it is the "operating system" that determines one's phys-

FIGURE 1.1   Three Levels of Uniqueness in Mental Programming
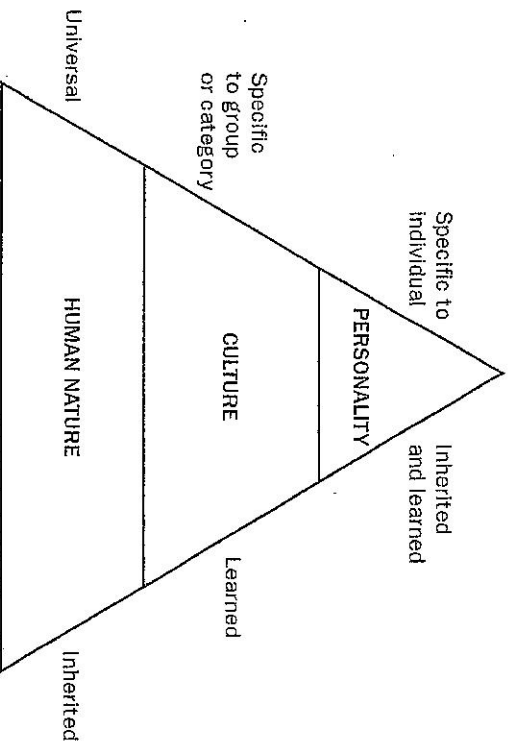
ical and basic psychological functioning. The human ability to feel fear, anger, love, joy, sadness, shame; the need to associate with others and to play and exercise oneself; and the facility to observe the environment and to talk about it with other humans all belong to this level of mental programming. However, what one does with these feelings, how one expresses fear, joy, observations, and so on, is modified by culture.

The *personality* of an individual, on the other hand, is her or his unique personal set of mental programs that needn't be shared with any other human being. It is based on traits that are partly inherited within the individual's unique set of genes and partly learned. *Learned* means modified by the influence of collective programming (culture) as well as by unique personal experiences.

Cultural traits have often been attributed to heredity, because philosophers and other scholars in the past did not know how to otherwise explain the remarkable stability of differences in culture patterns among human groups. They underestimated the impact of learning from previous generations and of teaching to a future generation what one has learned oneself. The role of heredity is exaggerated in pseudotheories of race, which have been responsible for, among other things, the Holocaust organized by the Nazis during World War II. Ethnic strife is often justified by unfounded arguments of cultural superiority and inferiority.

In the United States there have been periodic scientific discussions on whether certain ethnic groups (in particular, blacks) could be genetically less intelligent than others (in particular, whites).[5] The arguments used for genetic differences, by the way, make Asians in the United States on average *more intelligent* than whites. It is extremely difficult if not impossible, however, to find tests of intelligence that are culture free. Such tests should reflect only innate abilities and be insensitive to differences in the social environment. In the United States a larger share of blacks than of whites has grown up in socially disadvantaged circumstances, which is a cultural influence no test known to us can circumvent. The same logic applies to differences in intelligence between ethnic groups in other countries.

Cultural Relativism

In daily conversations, in political discourse, and in the media that feed them, alien cultures are often pictured in moral terms, as better or worse.

Yet there are no scientific standards for considering the ways of thinking, feeling, and acting of one group as intrinsically superior or inferior to those of another.

Studying differences in culture among groups and societies presupposes a neutral vantage point, a position of cultural relativism. A great French anthropologist, Claude Lévi-Strauss (born 1908), has expressed it as follows:

Cultural relativism affirms that one culture has no absolute criteria for judging the activities of another culture as "low" or "noble." However, every culture can and should apply such judgment to its own activities, because its members are actors as well as observers.[6]

Cultural relativism does not imply normlessness for oneself, nor for one's society. It does call for suspending judgment when dealing with groups or societies different from one's own. One should think twice before applying the norms of one person, group, or society to another. Information about the nature of the cultural differences between societies, their roots, and their consequences should precede judgment and action.

Even after having been informed, the foreign observer is still likely to deplore certain ways of the other society. If professionally involved in the other society—for example, as an expatriate manager or development cooperation expert—she or he may very well want to induce changes. In colonial days foreigners often wielded absolute power in other societies, and they could impose their rules on it. In these postcolonial days foreigners who want to change something in another society will have to negotiate their interventions. Negotiation again is more likely to succeed when the parties concerned understand the reasons for the differences in viewpoints.

Symbols, Heroes, Rituals, and Values

Cultural differences manifest themselves in several ways. From the many terms used to describe manifestations of culture, the following four together cover the total concept rather neatly: symbols, heroes, rituals, and values. Figure 1.2 depicts these terms as the skins of an onion: symbols represent the most superficial and values the deepest manifestations of culture, with heroes and rituals in between.

FIGURE 1.2 The "Onion": Manifestations of Culture at Different Levels of Depth
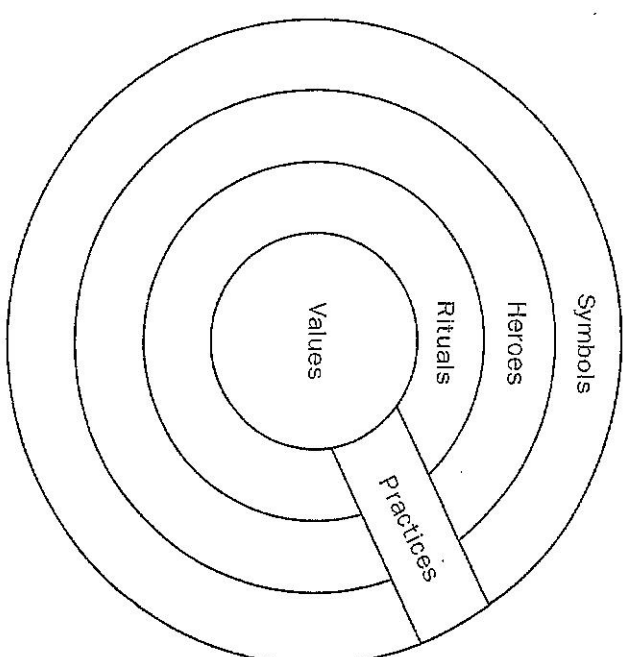
Symbols are words, gestures, pictures, or objects that carry a particular meaning only recognized as such by those who share the culture. The words in a language or jargon belong to this category, as do dress, hairstyles, flags, and status symbols. New symbols are easily developed and old ones disappear; symbols from one cultural group are regularly copied by others. This is why symbols have been put into the outermost (superficial) layer of Figure 1.2.

Heroes are persons, alive or dead, real or imaginary, who possess characteristics that are highly prized in a culture and thus serve as models for behavior. Even Barbie, Batman, or, as a contrast, Snoopy in the United States, Asterix in France, or Ollie B. Bommel (Mr. Bumble) in the Netherlands have served as cultural heroes. In this age of television, outward appearances have become more important than they were before in the choice of heroes.

Rituals are collective activities, technically superfluous to reaching desired ends, but which within a culture are considered as socially essential. They are therefore carried out for their own sake. Examples include ways of greeting and paying respect to others, as well as social and religious ceremonies. Business and political meetings organized for seemingly rational reasons often serve mainly ritual purposes, such as reinforcing group cohesion or allowing the leaders to assert themselves. Rituals include *discourse*, the way language is used in text and talk, in daily interaction, and in communicating beliefs.[7]

In Figure 1.2 symbols, heroes, and rituals have been subsumed under the term *practices*. As such they are visible to an outside observer; their cultural meaning, however, is invisible and lies precisely and only in the way these practices are interpreted by the insiders.

The core of culture according to Figure 1.2 is formed by *values*. Values are broad tendencies to prefer certain states of affairs over others. Values are feelings with an arrow to it: a plus and a minus side. They deal with:

- Evil versus good
- Dirty versus clean
- Dangerous versus safe
- Forbidden versus permitted
- Decent versus indecent
- Moral versus immoral
- Ugly versus beautiful
- Unnatural versus natural
- Abnormal versus normal
- Paradoxical versus logical
- Irrational versus rational

Values are acquired early in our lives. Contrary to most animals, humans at birth are incompletely equipped for life. Fortunately our human physiology provides us with a receptive period of some ten to twelve years, a period in which we can quickly and largely unconsciously absorb necessary information from our environment. This includes symbols (such as language), heroes (such as our parents), and rituals (such as toilet training), and most importantly it includes our basic values. At the end of this period, we gradually switch to a different, conscious way of learning, focusing primarily on new practices. The process is pictured in Figure 1.3.
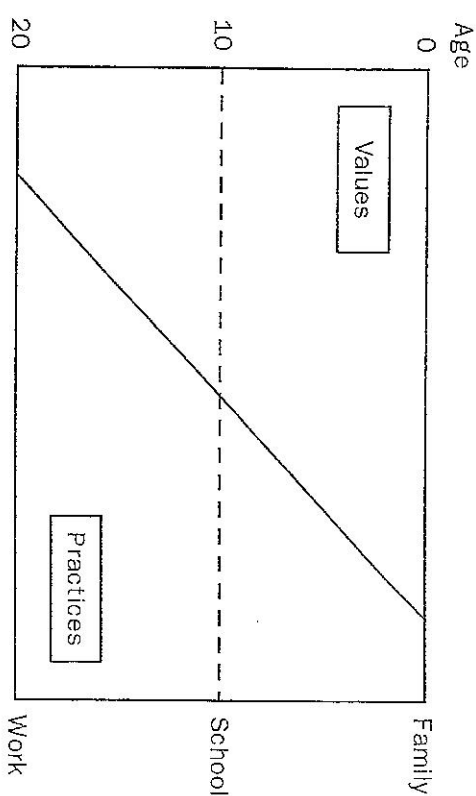
FIGURE 1.3   The Learning of Values and Practices

Age
0 .... Family
10 ...... Values .... School
20 .... Practices .... Work

Culture Reproduces Itself

Remember being a small child. How did you acquire your values? The first years are gone from your memory, but they are influential. Did you move about on your mother's hip or on her back all day? Did you sleep with her or with your siblings? Or were you kept in your own cot, pram, or crib? Did both your parents handle you, or only your mother, or other persons? Was there noise or silence around you? Did you see taciturn people, laughing ones, playing ones, working ones, tender or violent ones? What happened when you cried?

Then, memories begin. Who were your models, and what was your aim in life? Quite probably your parents or elder siblings were your heroes and you tried to imitate them. You learned which things were dirty and bad and how to be clean and good. For instance, you learned rules about what is clean and dirty about bodily functions including spitting, eating with your left hand, blowing your nose, defecating, or belching in public and about gestures such as touching various parts of your body or exposing them while sitting or standing. You learned how bad it was to break rules, about how much initiative you were supposed to take and how close You learned how much initiative you were supposed to take and how close

you were supposed to be to people, and you learned whether you were a boy or a girl, and what that implied.

Then when you were a child of perhaps six to twelve, schoolteachers and classmates, sports and TV idols, national or religious heroes entered your world as new models. You imitated now one, then another. Parents, teachers, and others rewarded or punished you for your behavior. You learned whether it was good or bad to ask questions, to speak up, to fight, to cry, to work hard, to lie, to be impolite. You learned when to be proud and when to be ashamed. You also exercised politics, especially with your age-mates: How to make friends? Is it possible to rise in the hierarchy? How? Who owes what to whom?

In your teenage years, your attention shifted to others your age. You were intensely concerned with your gender identity and with forming relationships with peers. Depending on the society in which you lived, you spent your time mainly with your own sex or with mixed sexes. You may have intensely admired some of your peers.

Later you may have chosen a partner, probably using criteria similar to other young people in your country. You may have had children—and then the cycle starts again.

There is a powerful stabilizing force in this cycle that biologists call *homeostasis*. Parents tend to reproduce the education that they received, whether they want to or not. And there is only a modest role for technology. The most salient learning in your tender years is all about the body and about relationships with people. Not coincidentally, these are also sources of intense taboos.

Because they were acquired so early in our lives, many values remain unconscious to those who hold them. Therefore they cannot be discussed, nor can they be directly observed by outsiders. They can only be inferred from the way people act under various circumstances. If one asks why they act as they do, people may say they just "know" or "feel" how to do the right thing. Their heart or their conscience tells them.

Layers of Culture

Every group or category of people carries a set of common mental programs that constitutes its culture. As almost everyone belongs to a number of different groups and categories at the same time, we unavoidably

carry several layers of mental programming within ourselves, corresponding to different levels of culture. In particular:

- A national level, according to one's country (or countries for people who migrated during their lifetime)
- A regional and/or ethnic and/or religious and/or linguistic affiliation level, as most nations are composed of culturally different regional and/or ethnic and/or religious and/or language groups
- A gender level, according to whether a person was born as a girl or as a boy
- A generation level, separating grandparents from parents from children
- A social class level, associated with educational opportunities and with a person's occupation or profession
- For those who are employed, organizational, departmental, and/or corporate levels, according to the way employees have been socialized by their work organization

The mental programs from these various levels are not necessarily in harmony. In modern society they are often partly conflicting; for example, religious values may conflict with generation values or gender values with organizational practices. Conflicting mental programs within people make it difficult to anticipate their behavior in a new situation.

Culture Change: Changing Practices, Stable Values

If you could step into a time machine and travel back fifty years to the time of your parents or grandparents, you would find the world much changed. There would be no computers and television would be quite new. The cities would appear small and provincial, with only the occasional car and few big retail chain outlets. Travel back another fifty years and cars disappear from the streets, as do telephones, washing machines, and vacuum cleaners from our houses and airplanes from the air.

Our world is changing. Technology invented by people surrounds us. The World Wide Web has made our world appear smaller, so that the notion of a "global village" seems appropriate. Business companies oper-

ate worldwide. They innovate rapidly; many do not know today what products they will manufacture and sell next year or what new job types they will need in five years. Mergers and stock market fluctuations shake the business landscape.

So on the surface, change is all-powerful. But how deep are these changes? Can human societies be likened to ships that are rocked about aimlessly on turbulent seas of change? Or to shores, covered and then bared again by new waves washing in, altered ever so slowly with each successive tide?

A book by a Frenchman about his visit to the United States contains the following text:

The American ministers of the Gospel do not attempt to draw or to fix all the thoughts of man upon the life to come; they are willing to surrender a portion of his heart to the cares of the present . . . If they take no part themselves in productive labor, they are at least interested in its progress, and they applaud its results. . . .

The author, we might think, is referring to U.S. TV evangelists. In fact, he was Alexis de Tocqueville and his book appeared in 1835.[8]

Recorded comments by visitors from one country to another are a rich source of information on how national culture differences were perceived in the past, and they often look strikingly modern, even if they date from centuries ago.

There are many things in societies that technology and its products do not change. If young Turks drink Coca-Cola, this does not necessarily affect their attitudes toward authority. In some respects young Turks differ from old Turks, just as young Americans differ from old Americans. In the "onion" model of Figure 1.2, such differences mostly involve the relatively superficial spheres of symbols and heroes, of fashion and consumption. In the sphere of values—that is, fundamental feelings about life and about other people—young Turks differ from young Americans just as much as old Turks differ from old Americans. There is no evidence that the values of present-day generations from different countries are converging.

Culture change can be fast for the outer layers of the onion diagram, labeled *practices*. Practices are the visible part of cultures. New practices can be learned throughout our lifetime; people older than seventy happily learn to surf the Web on their first personal computer, acquiring new sym-

bols, meeting new heroes, and communicating through new rituals. Culture change is slow for the onion's core, labeled *values*. As already argued, these were learned when we were children, from parents who acquired them when *they* were children. This makes for considerable stability in the basic values of a society, in spite of sweeping changes in practices.

These basic values affect primarily the gender, the national, and maybe the regional layer of culture. Never believe politicians, religious leaders, or business chiefs who claim they will reform national values. These should be considered given facts, as hard as a country's geographic position or its weather. Layers of culture acquired later in life tend to be more changeable. This is the case, in particular, for organizational cultures that the organization's members joined as adults. It doesn't mean that changing organizational cultures is easy—as will be shown in Chapter 8—but at least it is feasible.

There is no doubt that dazzling technological changes are taking place that affect all but the poorest or remotest of people. But people put these new technologies to familiar uses. Many of them are used to doing much the same things as our grandparents did, to make money, to impress other people, to make life easier, to coerce others, or to seduce potential partners. All these activities are part of the social game. We are attentive to how other people use technology, what clothes they wear, what jokes they make, what food they eat, how they spend their vacations. And we have a fine antenna that tells us what choices to make ourselves if we wish to belong to a particular social circle.

The social game itself is not deeply changed by the changes in today's society. The unwritten rules for success, failure, belonging, and other key attributes of our lives remain similar. We need to fit in, to behave in ways that are acceptable to the groups we belong to. Most changes concern the toys we use in playing the game.

Prehistory of Culture

How old is the social game itself? Millions of years. Modern humans (*Homo sapiens*) have existed for more than 100,000 years. It is estimated that by the end of the next-to-last ice age (c. 130,000 B.C.), some ten thousand to fifty thousand of them existed worldwide—that is, in Africa.

Around five million years earlier, their ancestors separated from those of today's chimpanzees and bonobos, our closest relatives. Students of ani-

nial behavior have convincingly demonstrated that these apes possess all the important characteristics of culture, notably notions of "good" and "bad" behavior that we call values.⁹ Each social group has its own version of important social rituals, such as grooming or food sharing. Group members spend amazing amounts of time together performing these rituals, and closer studies reveal that stable relations exist between individuals. Each group possesses its own forms of technological expertise (for example, using stones to crack palm nuts or sticks to collect termites). These rituals and capabilities are passed on through social learning or, if you will, aping. Chimpanzees also have finely calibrated mental models of who owes what to whom when it comes to food sharing.

There is a remarkable difference between the societies of chimpanzees and bonobos. The two species have a common ancestry. They are so similar in appearance that bonobos have long been taken for another subspecies of chimpanzee. But whereas chimpanzees are hunter-gatherer societies dominated by political coalitions of males with a good deal of endemic violence, bonobos are vegetarian groups with female bonding in which the male leaders are much less dominant and social tensions are resolved not through violence but through erotic activity. Chimps are from Mars, while bonobos are from Venus.

These primates, immensely less intelligent than we are, possess social units with distinctive cultures. Why? Population exchanges occur all the time. In the case of chimpanzees, adolescent females switch social groups, ensuring that genetic diversity is maintained. But usually these migrants do not take their practices with them. Instead, they adapt to the culture of the receiving group in order to fit in. So while the females' transfer guarantees genetic crossover, it does not do so for cultural crossover. The rituals and practices of each group effectively serve as a way to maintain group identity.

At the same time, chimpanzee and bonobo cultures do change—how else could the two species have grown so widely apart, or how could each chimpanzee colony have its own practices? But cultural change among them has been slow. There are social forces that inhibit cultural change in favor of the status quo. Group cultures can perpetuate themselves.

Early humans also lived as hunter-gatherers, in analogy to chimpanzees and bonobos. Only they were much quicker of wit. They mastered fire and developed elaborate hunting tools. They also developed an intricate information society with complex symbolic language. This enabled

them to communicate about the movements of animals and the properties of plants and to discuss hunting stratagems. Around 100,000 B.C. they started to migrate across the globe. Modern DNA research has enabled geneticists to trace the various moves, from Africa to central Asia and from there to Europe, Australia, and finally the Americas.¹⁰ By the end of the last ice age, around 10,000 B.C., humans were present on all continents. From about this time, archaeological findings afford a much clearer picture of our prehistory. Burial sites of hunter-gatherers, as well as cave paintings, show a remarkable variety in styles and arrangements. There were obviously many different cultures in the ice-age world.

In the centuries from 10,000 until 5000 B.C., with a milder climate, population sizes increased, leading to depletion of wild resources. In various parts of the world, people responded by starting to manipulate the environment through resowing wild grains (for example, wheat and barley in Asia Minor, rice along the Yangtze River) and herding wild animals (for example, sheep and goats in the Mediterranean, cattle in Europe, horses in central Asia). Thus agriculture was invented. It led to a social revolution. Social units were no longer restricted to small bands of hunter-gatherers with limited hierarchy and flexible division of labor. Much higher concentrations of people could now live together. Stores of food could be made. Specialization of labor and concentration of knowledge and power became possible, as did large-scale wars. All the main attributes of today's human societies were present by that time.¹¹

From about 3000 B.C., prehistory starts to change into history as written accounts have come down to us. In fertile areas of the world large empires were built, usually because the rulers of one part succeeded in conquering other parts. The oldest empire in existence within living memory is China. Although it has not always been unified, the Chinese Empire possesses a continuous history of about four thousand years. Other empires disintegrated. In the eastern Mediterranean and southwestern part of Asia, empires grew, flourished, and fell, only to be succeeded by others: the Sumerian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Egyptian, Persian, Greek, Roman, and Turkish empires, to mention only a few. The South Asian subcontinent and the Indonesian archipelago had their empires, for instance, the Maurya, the Gupta, and later the Mughal in India and the Majapahit on Java. In Central and South America the Aztec, Maya, and Inca empires have left their monuments. And in Africa, Ethiopia and Benin are examples of ancient states.

Next to and often within the territory of these larger empires, smaller units survived in the form of independent small "kingdoms" or tribes. Even now, in New Guinea most of the population lives in small and relatively isolated tribes, each with its own language and hardly integrated into the larger society.

In social life, including economic processes, few things are invented from scratch. Multinational companies existed as early as 2000 B.C.; the Assyrians, Phoenicians, Greeks, and Romans all had their own versions of globalized business.[14]

The cultural diversity among our ancestors has been inherited by the present generation. National and regional culture differences today still partly reflect the borders of the former empires. In the coming chapters it will be shown how Latin cultures still hold common traits derived from the Roman Empire and how Chinese cultures reflect the inheritance of the Chinese Empire.

From this brief sweep through history we can conclude that the intricate social game that makes us cultural beings is very, very ancient indeed.

Sources of Cultural Diversity and Change

The present world shows an amazing variety of cultures, both in terms of values and in terms of practices. If all humankind descends from common ancestors, and if cultures seek continuity, what forces were responsible for diversifying our ancestors' cultures so much? Recognizing these will also help us predict future changes.

Culture changes have been brought about, and will continue to be brought about, by major impacts of forces of nature and forces of humans.

The first reason for cultural diversity has been adaptation to new natural environments. As humankind gradually populated almost the entire world, the very need for survival led to different cultural solutions. For example, Chapter 2 will show that societies in cooler climates tended to develop greater equality among their members than did societies in tropical climates.

Collective migrations to different environments were often forced by famines, owing to climate changes (like desertification), to overpopulation, or to political mismanagement (as by the British rulers of Ireland in the nineteenth century). Natural disasters, such as earthquakes and floods, have sometimes wiped out entire societies and created new opportunities for others.

Archaeological finds have proven that trade between different cultures has existed as long as the cultures themselves. Traders transferred not only foreign goods but also new habits and technologies.

Military conquest has drastically changed cultures by killing, moving, and mixing populations and imposing new lords and new rules. Chapters 2 through 6 will show repeated evidence of the lengthening cultural shadows of the Roman and Chinese Empires.

Missionary zeal converting people to new religions has also changed cultures. If we trace the religious history of countries, however, what religion a population has embraced and which version of that religion seem to have been a *result* of previously existing cultural value patterns as much as, or more than, a *cause* of cultural differences. The great religions of the world, at some time in their history, have all undergone profound schisms: between Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, and various Protestant groups in Christianity; between Sunni and Shia in Islam; between liberals and various fundamentalist groups in Jewry; between Hinayana and Mahayana in Buddhism. Preexisting cultural differences among groups of believers played a major role in these schisms. For example, the Reformation movement within the Roman Catholic Church in the sixteenth century initially affected all of Europe. However, in countries that more than a thousand years earlier had belonged to the Roman Empire, a Counter-Reformation reinstated the authority of the Roman church. In the end the Reformation only succeeded in countries without a Roman tradition. Although today most of northern Europe is Protestant and most of southern Europe Roman Catholic, what is at the origin of the cultural differences is not this religious split but the inheritance of the Roman Empire. Religious affiliation by itself is therefore less culturally relevant than is often assumed.[15] This does not exclude that once a religion has settled, it does reinforce the culture patterns on the basis of which it was adopted, by making these into core elements in its teachings.

Scientific discoveries and innovations, whether native or imported from outside, as previously argued, tend to affect the practices more than the social games. Some, like the invention of agriculture, were so fundamental that they did change entire cultures, including their values.

Nearly all of these changes affect more than one society; some are truly global. When cultures change together because of a common cause, the differences between them often remain intact. This is why observations by de Tocqueville and other travelers of past centuries can still sound so modern.

National Culture Differences

The invention of *nations*, political units into which the entire world is divided and to one of which every human being is supposed to belong—as manifested by her or his passport—is a recent phenomenon in human history. Earlier there were states, but not everybody belonged to or identified with one of these. The nation system was only introduced worldwide in the mid-twentieth century. It followed the colonial system that had developed during the preceding three centuries. In this colonial period the technologically advanced countries of western Europe divided among themselves virtually all territories of the globe that were not held by another strong political power. The borders between the former colonial nations still reflect the colonial legacy. In Africa in particular, most national borders correspond to the logic of the colonial powers rather than to the cultural dividing lines of the local populations.

Nations, therefore, should not be equated with *societies*, which are historically, organically developed forms of social organization. Strictly speaking, the concept of a common culture applies to societies, not to nations. Nevertheless, many nations do form historically developed wholes even if they consist of clearly different groups and even if they contain less integrated minorities.

Within nations that have existed for some time there are strong forces toward further integration: (usually) one dominant national language, common mass media, a national education system, a national army, a national political system, national representation in sports events with a strong symbolic and emotional appeal, a national market for certain skills, products, and services. Today's nations do not attain the degree of internal homogeneity of the isolated, usually nonliterate societies studied by field anthropologists, but they are the source of a considerable amount of common mental programming of their citizens.[14]

On the other hand, there remains a tendency for ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups to fight for recognition of their own identity, if not for national independence; this tendency has been increasing rather than decreasing since the 1960s. Examples are the Ulster Roman Catholics; the Belgian Flemish; the Basques in Spain and France; the Kurds in Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey; the ethnic groups of the former Yugoslavia; the Hutu and Tutsi tribes in Rwanda; and the Chechens in Russia.

In research on cultural differences, nationality—the passport one holds—should therefore be used with care. Yet it is often the only feasible criterion for classification. Rightly or wrongly, collective properties are ascribed to the citizens of certain countries: people refer to "typically American," "typically German," "typically Japanese" behavior. Using nationality as a criterion is a matter of expediency, because it is immensely easier to obtain data for nations than for organic homogeneous societies. Nations as political bodies supply all kinds of statistics about their populations. Survey data (that is, the answers people give on paper-and-pencil questionnaires related to their culture) are also mostly collected through national networks. Where it is possible to separate results by region, ethnic, or linguistic group, this should be done.

A strong reason for collecting data at the level of nations is that one of the purposes of cross-cultural research is to promote cooperation among nations. As argued at the beginning of this chapter, the (more than two hundred) nations that exist today populate one single world, and we either survive or perish together. So it makes practical sense to focus on cultural factors separating or uniting nations.

National Cultures or National Institutions?

Different countries have different institutions: governments, laws and legal systems, associations, enterprises, religious communities, school systems, family structures. Some people, including quite a few sociologists and economists, believe these are the true reasons for differences in thinking, feeling, and acting between countries. If we can explain such differences by institutions that are clearly visible, do we really need to speculate about cultures as invisible mental programs?

The answer to this question was given more than two centuries ago by a French nobleman, Charles-Louis de Montesquieu (1689–1755), in *De l'esprit des lois* (*The Spirit of the Laws*).

Montesquieu argued that there is such a thing as "the general spirit of a nation" (what we now would call its culture) and that "[t]he legislator should follow the spirit of the nation . . . for we do nothing better than what we do freely and by following our natural genius."[16] Thus institutions follow mental programs, and in the way they function they adapt to local culture. Similar laws work out differently in different countries, as the

European Union has experienced on many occasions. In their turn institutions that have grown within a culture perpetuate the mental programming on which they were founded. Institutions cannot be understood without considering culture, and understanding culture presumes insight into institutions. Reducing explanations to either one or the other is sterile.

An important consequence of this is that we cannot change the way people in a country think, feel, and act by simply importing foreign institutions. After the demise of communism in the former Soviet Union and other parts of Eastern Europe, some economists thought that all the former communist countries needed was capitalist institutions, U.S. style, in order to find the road to wealth. Things did not work out that way. Each country has to struggle through its own type of reforms, adapted to the software of the minds of its people. Globalization by multinational corporations and supranational institutions such as the World Bank meets fierce local resistance because economic systems are not culture free.

What About National *Management* Cultures?

The business and business school literature often refers to national "management" or "leadership" cultures. Management and leadership, however, cannot be isolated from other parts of society. U.S. anthropologist Marvin Harris has warned that "one point anthropologists have always made is that aspects of social life which do not seem to be related to another, actually are related."[16]

Managers and leaders, as well as the people they work with, are part of national societies. If we want to understand their behavior, we have to understand their societies—for example, what types of personalities are common in their country, how families function and what this means for the way children are brought up, how the school system works and who goes to what type of school, how the government and the political system affect the life of the citizens, and what historical events their generation has experienced. We may also need to know something about their behavior as consumers and their beliefs about health and sickness, crime and punishment, and religious matters. We may learn a lot from their countries' literature, arts, and sciences. The following chapters will at times pay attention to all of these fields, and most of them will prove relevant for understanding a country's *management* as well. In culture there is no shortcut to the business world.

Measuring Values

As values, more than practices, are the stable element in culture, comparative research on culture presumes the measurement of values. Inferring values from people's actions only is cumbersome and ambiguous. Various paper-and-pencil questionnaires have been developed that ask for people's preferences among alternatives. The answers should not be taken too literally: in reality people will not always act as they have scored on the questionnaire. Still, questionnaires provide useful information, because they show differences in answers between groups or categories of respondents. For example, suppose a question asks for one's preference for time off from work versus more pay. An individual employee who states that he or she prefers time off may in fact choose the money if presented with the actual choice, but if in group A more people claim preferring time off than in group B, this indicates a cultural difference between these groups in the relative value of free time versus money.

In interpreting people's statements about their values, it is important to distinguish between the *desirable* and the *desired*: how people think the world ought to be versus what people want for themselves. Questions about the desirable refer to people in general and are worded in terms of right/wrong, agree/disagree, important/unimportant, or something similar. In the abstract everybody is in favor of virtue and opposed to sin, and answers about the desirable express people's views about what represents virtue and what corresponds to sin. The desired, on the contrary, is worded in terms of you or me and what we want for ourselves, including our less virtuous desires. The desirable bears only a faint resemblance to actual behavior. But even statements about the desired, although closer to actual behavior, do not necessarily correspond to the way people really behave when they have to choose.

The desirable differs from the desired in the nature of the norms involved. *Norms* are standards for behavior that exist within a group or category of people.[17] In the case of the desirable, the norm is absolute, pertaining to what is ethically right. In the case of the desired, the norm is statistical: it indicates the choices made by the majority. The desirable relates more to ideology, the desired to practical matters.

Interpretations of value studies that neglect the difference between the desirable and the desired may lead to paradoxical results. A case in which the two produced diametrically opposed answers was found in the IBM

studies described later in this chapter: Employees in different countries were asked for their agreement or disagreement with the statement "Employees in industry should participate more in the decisions made by management." This is a statement about the desirable. In another question people were asked whether they personally preferred a manager who "usually consults with subordinates before reaching a decision." This is a statement about the desired. A comparison between the answers to these two questions revealed that in countries in which the consulting manager was less popular, people agreed more with the general statement that employees should participate in decisions, and vice versa; the ideology was the mirror image of the day-to-day relationship with the boss.[18]

Dimensions of National Cultures

In the first half of the twentieth century, social anthropology developed the conviction that all societies, modern or traditional, face the same basic problems—only the answers differ. American anthropologists, in particular Ruth Benedict (1887–1948) and Margaret Mead (1901–78), played an important role in popularizing this message for a wide audience.

The logical next step was that social scientists attempted to identify *what* problems were common to all societies, through conceptual reasoning and reflection on field experiences as well as through statistical studies. In 1954 two Americans, the sociologist Alex Inkeles and the psychologist Daniel Levinson, published a broad survey of the English-language literature on national culture. They suggested that the following issues qualify as common basic problems worldwide, with consequences for the functioning of societies, of groups within those societies, and of individuals within those groups:

1. Relation to authority
2. Conception of self—in particular, the relationship between individual and society—and the individual's concept of masculinity and femininity
3. Ways of dealing with conflicts, including the control of aggression and the expression of feelings[19]

Twenty years later Geert was given the opportunity to study a large body of survey data about the values of people in more than fifty countries around the world. These people worked in the local subsidiaries of one

large multinational corporation: IBM. At first sight it may look surprising that employees of a multinational—a very specific kind of people—could serve for identifying differences in *national* value systems. From one country to another, however, they represented almost perfectly matched samples: they were similar in all respects except nationality, which made the effect of nationality differences in their answers stand out unusually clearly.

A statistical analysis of the country averages of the answers to questions about the values of similar IBM employees in different countries[20] revealed common problems, but with solutions differing from country to country, in the following areas:

1. Social inequality, including the relationship with authority
2. The relationship between the individual and the group
3. Concepts of masculinity and femininity: the social and emotional implications of having been born as a boy or a girl
4. Ways of dealing with uncertainty and ambiguity, which turned out to be related to the control of aggression and the expression of emotions

These empirical results covered amazingly well the areas predicted by Inkeles and Levinson twenty years before. Discovering their prediction provided strong support for the theoretical importance of the empirical findings. Problems that are basic to all human societies should be reflected in different studies regardless of the approaches followed. The Inkeles and Levinson study is not the only one whose conclusions overlap with ours, but it is the one that most strikingly predicts what Geert found.

The four basic problem areas defined by Inkeles and Levinson and empirically found in the IBM data represent dimensions of cultures. A *dimension* is an aspect of a culture that can be measured relative to other cultures. The basic problem areas correspond to <u>four dimensions</u> that will be described in Chapters 2 through 5 of this book. They have been named *power distance* (from small to large), *collectivism versus individualism*, *femininity versus masculinity*, and *uncertainty avoidance* (from weak to strong). Each of these terms existed already in some part of the social sciences, and they seemed to apply reasonably well to the basic problem area each dimension stands for: Together they form a four-dimensional model of differences between national cultures. Each country in the model is characterized by a score on each of the four dimensions.

A dimension groups together a number of phenomena in a society that were empirically found to occur in combination, regardless of whether there seems to be a logical necessity for their going together. The logic of societies is not the same as the logic of individuals looking at them. The grouping of the different aspects of a dimension is always based on statistical relationships—that is, on trends for these phenomena to occur in combination, not on iron links. Some aspects in some societies may go against a general trend found across most other societies. Because they are found with the help of statistical methods, dimensions can only be detected on the basis of comparative information from a number of countries—say, at least ten. In the case of the IBM research, Geert was fortunate to obtain comparable data about culturally determined values from fifty countries and three multicountry regions, which made the dimensions within their differences stand out quite clearly.

The scores for each country on one dimension can be pictured as points along a line. For two dimensions at a time, they become points in a diagram. For three dimensions, they could, with some imagination, be seen as points in space. For four or more dimensions, they become difficult to imagine. This is a disadvantage of dimensional models. Another way of picturing differences between countries (or other social systems) is through typologies. A *typology* describes a set of ideal types, each of them easy to imagine. A common typology of countries in the second half of the twentieth century was dividing them into a First, Second, and Third World (a capitalist, communist, and former colonial bloc).

Whereas typologies are easier to grasp than dimensions, they are problematic in empirical research. Real cases seldom fully correspond to one single ideal type. Most cases are hybrids, and arbitrary rules have to be made for classifying them as belonging to one type or another. With a dimensional model, on the contrary, cases can always be scored unambiguously. On the basis of their dimension scores, cases can *afterward* empirically be sorted into clusters with similar scores. These clusters then form an empirical typology. More than fifty countries in the IBM study could, on the basis of their four-dimensional scores, be sorted into twelve such clusters.[21]

In practice typologies and dimensional models are complementary. Dimensional models are preferable for research, and typologies are useful for teaching purposes. This book will use a kind of typology approach for explaining each of the dimensions. For every separate dimension, it

describes the two opposite extremes as pure types. Later on the four dimensions are plotted two by two, every plot creating four types. The country scores on the dimensions will show that most real cases are somewhere in between the extremes.

Replications of the IBM Research

While IBM survey data still continued to come in, Geert administered some of the same questions to an international population of non-IBM managers. These people, who came from different companies in fifteen different countries, attended courses at a business school in Switzerland where Geert was a visiting lecturer.[22] At that time he did not yet have a clear concept of dimensions in the data, but the replication showed that on a key question about power (later part of the *power distance* dimension), the countries ranked almost exactly the same as in IBM. Other questions indicated country differences in what we now call individualism versus collectivism, again very similar to those in IBM. This was the first proof that the country differences found inside IBM existed elsewhere as well.

In later years many people administered the IBM questionnaire—or parts of it, or its later, improved versions called Values Survey Modules (VSMs)—to other groups of respondents. The usefulness of replications increases with the number of countries included. The more countries, the easier it becomes to use statistical tests for verifying the degree of similarity in the results. Until the end of 2002, next to many smaller studies, we count six major replication studies, each covering fourteen or more countries from the IBM database. They are listed in Table 1.1.

Four of the six replications in Table 1.1 confirm only three out of the four dimensions—and each time the one missing is different. For example, data obtained from consumers did not replicate the power distance dimension. We assume this is because the respondents included people in different jobs with different relationships to power or people without paid jobs at all, like students and housewives.

Most smaller studies compared two or three countries at a time. It would be too good to expect confirmation of the IBM results in all of these cases, but a review of nineteen small replications by the Danish researcher Mikael Søndergaard found that together they statistically confirmed all four dimensions.[23] The strongest confirmation was for individualism. Most small replications start from the United States, which in the IBM studies

TABLE 1.1 Six Major Replications of the IBM Research

Author	Year Publ	Sample	No. of Ctrs	Power	Indiv	Mascu	Uncer
					DIMENSIONS REPLICATED		
Hoppe	1990	Elites[1]	18	x	x	x	x
Shane	1995	Employees[2]	28	x	x		x
Merritt	1998	Pilots[3]	19	x	x	x	x
de Mooij	2001	Consumers[4]	15		x	x	x
Mouritzen	2002	Municipal[5]	14	x	x	x	x
van Nimwegen	2002	Bank empl[6]	19	x	x	x	x

1. Members of government, parliamentarians, labor and employers' leaders, academics, and artists. These people were surveyed in 1984 via the Salzburg Seminar in American Studies. On the basis of the formulas in the VSM 82, their answers confirmed power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and individualism (Hoppe, 1990); using the VSM 94 they also confirmed masculinity (Hoppe, 1998).

2. Employees of six international corporations (but not IBM) from between 28 and 32 countries; Shane (1995); Shane & Venkataraman (1996). This study confirmed power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and individualism. It did not include questions about masculinity, which was judged politically incorrect(!).

3. Commercial airline pilots from 19 countries; Helmreich & Merritt (1998). Using the VSM 82 this study confirmed power distance and individualism; including other IBM questions judged more relevant to the pilot's situation, it confirmed all four dimensions (Merritt, 2000).

4. Consumers from 15 European countries: de Mooij (2004); Culture's Consequences (2001), pp. 187, 262, 336. Using the VSM 94 this study confirmed uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity. It did not confirm power distance, probably because the consumers were not selected on the basis of the jobs they did (or whether they had a paid job at all).

5. Top municipal civil servants from 14 countries: Søndergaard (2002); Mouritzen & Svara (2002). Using the VSM 94 they confirmed power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity and related the first two to the forms of local government in the countries.

6. Employees of an international bank in 19 countries: van Nimwegen (2002). This study confirmed power distance and individualism and also, but with a somewhat lesser fit, masculinity and long-term orientation, but not uncertainty avoidance.

was the highest scorer on individualism, and any comparison with the United States is likely to show a clear individualism difference.

Table 1.2 lists in alphabetical order seventy-four countries or regions for which the IBM research and its replications produced usable dimension scores. The scores in question will be shown in Chapters 2 through 6.

TABLE 1.2 Countries and Regions for Which Dimension Scores Are Available

Arabic-speaking countries (Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates)	Ecuador	Panama
	Estonia	Peru
	Finland	Philippines
	France	Poland
	Germany	Portugal
	Great Britain	Romania
	Greece	Russia
Argentina	Guatemala	Salvador
Australia	Hong Kong (China)	Serbia
Austria	Hungary	Singapore
Bangladesh	India	Slovakia
Belgium Flemish	Indonesia	Slovenia
Belgium Walloon (French speaking)	(Dutch speaking)	South Africa[1]
Brazil	Iran	Spain
Bulgaria	Ireland	Suriname
Canada total	Israel	Sweden
Canada Quebec	Italy	Switzerland French
Chile	Jamaica	Switzerland German
China	Japan	Taiwan
Colombia	Korea (South)	Thailand
Costa Rica	Luxembourg	Trinidad
Croatia	Malaysia	Turkey
Czech Republic	Malta	United States
Denmark	Mexico	Uruguay
East Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia)	Morocco	Venezuela
	Netherlands	Vietnam
	New Zealand	West Africa (Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone)
	Norway	
	Pakistan	

1. The data were from whites only.

The success of the replications does not necessarily mean that the countries' cultures did not change since the IBM research, but that if they changed, they changed together, so that their relative positions remained intact.

Using Correlations

The comparisons between the replications and the original IBM scores used a statistical method, *correlation*.

For those unfamiliar with the statistical term *correlation* and the meaning of correlation coefficients, a brief explanation follows. Two measures are said to be correlated if they vary together. For example, if we were to measure the height and weight of a hundred people randomly picked from the street, we would find the height and weight measures to be correlated; taller people would also usually be heavier, and shorter ones would also tend to be lighter. Because some people are tall and skinny and some are short and fat, the correlation would not be perfect.

The coefficient of correlation[24] expresses the strength of the relationship. If the correlation is perfect, so that one measure follows entirely from the other, the coefficient takes the value 1.00. If the correlation is nonexistent—the two measures are completely unrelated—the coefficient is 0.00. The coefficient can become negative if the two measures are each other's opposite—for example, a person's height and the number of times she or he would meet someone who is still taller. The lowest possible value is −1.00; in this case the two measures are again perfectly correlated, only the one is positive when the other is negative, and vice versa. In the example of the height and weight of people, one could expect a coefficient of about 0.80 if the sample included only adults and even higher if both children and adults were included in the sample, because children are extremely small and light compared to adults.

A correlation coefficient is said to be (statistically) significant if it is sufficiently different from 0 (to the positive or to the negative side) to rule out the possibility that the similarity between the two measures could be due to pure chance. The *significance level*, usually 0.05, 0.01, or 0.001, is the remaining risk that the similarity could still be accidental. If the significance level is 0.05, the odds are 19 to 1; if it is 0.001, the odds are 999 to 1.[25]

If the correlation coefficient between two measures is 1.00 or −1.00, we can obviously completely predict one if we know the other. If their correlation coefficient is ±0.90, we can predict 81 percent of the differences in one if we know the other; if it is ±0.80, we can predict 64 percent, and so on. The predictive power decreases with the square of the correlation coefficient. If we have a lot of data, a correlation coefficient of 0.40 may still be significant, although the first measure predicts only 0.40 × 0.40 = 16 percent of the second. The reason we are interested in such relatively weak correlations is that often phenomena in the social world are the result of many factors working at the same time: they are multicausal. Correlation analysis helps us to isolate possible causes, one by one.

Adding a Fifth Dimension

In late 1980, just after *Culture's Consequences* had been published, Geert met Michael Harris Bond from the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Bond and a number of his colleagues from the Asia-Pacific region had just finished a comparison of the values of female and male psychology students from each of ten national or ethnic groups in their region.[26] They had used an adapted version of the Rokeach Value Survey (RVS), developed by U.S. psychologist Milton Rokeach on the basis of an inventory of values in U.S. society around 1970. When Bond analyzed the RVS data in the same way that Geert had analyzed the IBM data, he also found four meaningful dimensions. Across the six countries that were part of both studies, each RVS dimension was significantly correlated with one of the IBM dimensions.[27]

The discovery of similar dimensions in completely different material represented strong support for the basic nature of what was found. With another questionnaire, using other respondents (students instead of IBM employees) at another point in time (data collected around 1979 instead of 1970) and in a restricted group of countries, four similar dimensions emerged. Yet both Bond and Geert were not just pleased but also puzzled. The survey results themselves demonstrated that people's ways of thinking are culturally constrained. As the researchers were human, they, too, were children of their culture. Both the IBM questionnaire and the RVS were products of Western minds. In both cases respondents in non-Western countries had answered Western questions. To what extent had this been responsible for the correlation between the results of the two

studies? To what extent had irrelevant questions been asked and relevant questions been omitted?

The standard solution suggested in order to avoid cultural bias in research is *decentering*, involving researchers from different cultures. In this respect the IBM questionnaire was better than the RVS; it had been developed by a five-nationality team and pretested in ten countries. The RVS was a purely American product, although the Asian-Pacific research team had adapted it somewhat by adding four values they felt to be relevant in their countries but missing on the Rokeach list.[28]

The problem about decentered research is the dynamics in the research team. All members are equal, but some are more equal than others. There is usually a senior researcher, the one who took the initiative, and he (rarely she) is usually from a Western background. Researchers from countries where respect for the senior guru and harmony within the team prevail will often be almost too eager to follow the magic of the prestigious team leader. This means that the project team will maintain its Western bias even with a predominantly non-Western membership. When the chief researcher comes from a non-Western country, he or she has often studied in the West and sometimes overadopts Western value positions, becoming "more Catholic than the pope."

Bond, himself a Canadian but having lived and worked in the Far East since 1971, found a creative solution to the Western bias problem. He had a new questionnaire designed with a deliberate non-Western bias, in this case a Chinese culture bias, which he used in the same way as Western questionnaires had been used, so that the results could be compared. Bond asked a number of Chinese social scientists from Hong Kong and Taiwan to prepare in Chinese a list of at least ten basic values for Chinese people. Through the elimination of overlap and, on the other side, adding some values that from his reading of Chinese philosophers and social scientists seemed to be similarly important, he arrived at a questionnaire of forty items—the same number as in the previously used RVS. The new questionnaire was called the Chinese Value Survey (CVS).

Subsequently the CVS was administered to one hundred students—fifty men and fifty women, like in the RVS study—in each of twenty-three countries around the world. The students used the Chinese version, the English version, or one of eight other language versions, translated, where possible, directly from the Chinese. A statistical analysis of the CVS results yielded again four dimensions. Across twenty overlapping countries, three dimensions of the CVS replicated dimensions earlier found in the IBM sur-

veys, but the fourth CVS dimension was not correlated with the fourth IBM dimension: uncertainty avoidance had no equivalent in the CVS. The fourth CVS dimension instead combined values opposing an orientation on the future to an orientation on the past and present.[29] Geert labeled it *long-term versus short-term orientation*, and we treat it as a fifth universal dimension. Chapter 6 will analyze it in depth.

Validation of the Country Culture Scores Against Other Measures

The next step was showing the practical implications of the dimension scores for the countries concerned. This was done quantitatively by correlating the dimension scores with other measures that could be logically expected to reflect the same culture differences. These quantitative checks were supplemented with qualitative, descriptive information about the countries. This entire process is called *validation*.

Examples, which will be elaborated on in Chapters 2 through 6, are that power distance was correlated with the use of violence in domestic politics and with income inequality in a country. Individualism was correlated with national wealth (GNP per capita) and with mobility between social classes from one generation to the next. Masculinity was correlated negatively with the share of GNP that governments of wealthy countries spent on development assistance to the Third World. Uncertainty avoidance was associated with Roman Catholicism and with the legal obligation in developed countries for citizens to carry identity cards. Long-term orientation was correlated with national savings rates.

Altogether, the 2001 edition of *Culture's Consequences* lists more than four hundred significant correlations of the IBM dimension scores with other measures.[30] A striking fact of the various validations is that correlations do not tend to become weaker over time. The IBM national dimension scores (or at least their relative positions) have remained as valid in the year 2000 as they were around 1970, indicating that they describe relatively enduring aspects of these countries' societies.

Other Classifications of National Cultures

The basic innovation of *Culture's Consequences*, when it appeared in 1980, was classifying national cultures along a number of dimensions. In the study of culture this represented a new *paradigm*—that is, a radically new

approach. A paradigm is not a theory, but rather one step before a theory; a way of thinking that leads to developing theories. New paradigms invariably lead to controversy, as they reverse cherished truths but also open new perspectives.[51] Since *Culture's Consequences*, several other theories of national cultures have used the same paradigm, each suggesting its own way of classifying them.

The most elaborate and best researched classification was developed by the Israeli psychologist Shalom H. Schwartz. From a survey of the literature, he composed a list of fifty-six values. Through a network of colleagues, he collected scores from samples of college students in fifty-four countries and elementary school teachers in fifty-six countries.[52] They scored the importance of each value "as a guiding principle in my life." Schwartz at first looked at differences between individuals, but his next step was comparing countries. On the basis of his data, he distinguished seven dimensions: conservatism, hierarchy, mastery, affective autonomy, intellectual autonomy, egalitarian commitment, and harmony. Based on country data published by Schwartz in 1994, there are significant correlations between his country scores and the IBM scores.[53] His is a different way of cutting the same pie.

A classification well known in the business world is used in the publications by Dutch business consultant Fons Trompenaars. He distinguishes universalism versus particularism, individualism versus collectivism, affectivity versus neutrality, specificity versus diffuseness, achievement versus ascription, time orientation, and relation to nature.[54] These dimensions derive from sociological theories of the 1950s and '60s[55] that Trompenaars applied to countries. He administered a questionnaire (with seventy-nine items) to samples of employees and managers from various organizations in various countries. In his 1993 book *Riding the Waves of Culture*, Trompenaars showed answer scores for thirty-nine countries on seventeen questions from the questionnaire, but these were not combined into country scores for his dimensions. The book shows no validation of Trompenaars's seven dimensions, which without country scores would have been impossible anyway. Trompenaars's database was analyzed by British psychologist Peter Smith and his colleague Shaun Dugan, who found only two independent dimensions in the data, one correlated with our individualism-collectivism dimension and the other primarily with our power distance dimensions, but also again with individualism-collectivism.[56] Trompenaars's questionnaire did not cover other aspects of national cultures.

Individualism-collectivism is the least controversial of our five dimensions, which may explain the popularity of Trompenaars's message among managers who may dislike conflicts.

An application of the dimensions-of-culture paradigm for which, as this was written, the main results had not yet appeared, is the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) Research Project, originally conceived by U.S. management professor Robert J. House in 1991. It focuses on the relationships between societal culture, organizational culture, and leadership. House has built an extensive network of some 150 coinvestigators who collected data from about nine thousand managers in five hundred different organizations in sixty-one countries. The project aims at measuring nine dimensions derived from the literature, including *Culture's Consequences*: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, social collectivism, in-group collectivism, gender egalitarianism, assertiveness, future orientation, performance orientation, and humane orientation.[57] These are hypothetical dimensions; the results should show to what extent the empirical dimensions in the data correspond with the theories.[58]

Originally not based on the dimensions-of-culture paradigm but still with direct consequences for classifying national cultures is the World Values Survey (WVS), led by U.S. political scientist Ronald Inglehart. A study of values via public opinion surveys was started in the early 1980s as the European Values Survey. In 1990 a second round was started, renamed the World Values Survey. Eventually covering some sixty thousand respondents across forty-three societies, representing about 70 percent of the world's population, this questionnaire included more than 360 forced-choice questions. Areas covered were ecology, economy, education, emotions, family, gender and sexuality, government and politics, happiness, health, leisure and friends, morality, religion, society and nation, and work.[59] In an overall statistical analysis, Inglehart found two key cultural dimensions, which he called *well-being versus survival* and *secular-rational versus traditional authority*.[40] These were significantly correlated with the IBM dimensions. Well-being versus survival correlated with individualism and masculinity; secular-rational versus traditional authority negatively correlated with power distance. Again, a different way of cutting the same pie. We expect that further analysis of the enormous WVS survey data bank may produce additional dimensions. In the meantime a third WVS round has been started.[41]

Cultural Differences According to Region, Ethnicity, Religion, Gender, Generation, and Class

Regional, ethnic, and religious cultures account for differences within countries; ethnic and religious groups often transcend political country borders. Such groups form minorities at the crossroads between the dominant culture of the nation and their own traditional group culture. Some assimilate into the mainstream, although this may take a generation or more; others continue to stick to their own ways. The United States, as the world's most prominent example of a people composed of immigrants, shows examples of both assimilation (the melting pot) and of retention of group identities over generations (for example, the Pennsylvania Dutch). Discrimination according to ethnic origin delays assimilation and represents a problem in many countries. Regional, ethnic, and religious cultures, insofar as they are learned from birth onward, can be described in the same terms as national cultures: basically the same dimensions that were found to differentiate among national cultures apply to these differences within countries.

Gender differences are not usually described in terms of cultures. It can be revealing to do so. If we recognize that within each society there is a men's culture that differs from a women's culture, this helps to explain why it is so difficult to change traditional gender roles. Women are not considered suitable for jobs traditionally filled by men, not because they are technically unable to perform these jobs, but because women do not carry the symbols, do not correspond to the hero images, do not participate in the rituals, or are not supposed to hold the values dominant in the men's culture, and vice versa. Feelings and fears about behaviors by the opposite sex can be of the same order of intensity as reactions of people exposed to foreign cultures. The subject of gender cultures will return in Chapter 4.

Generation differences in symbols, heroes, rituals, and values are evident to most people. They are often overestimated. Complaints about youth having lost respect for the values of their elders have been found on Egyptian papyrus scrolls dating from 2000 B.C. and in the writings of Hesiod, a Greek author from the end of the eighth century B.C. Many differences in practices and values between generations are normal attributes of age that repeat themselves for each successive pair of generations. Historical events, however, do affect some generations in a special way. The Chinese who were of student age during the 1966–76 Cultural Revolution stand wit-

ness to this. Chinese who in this period would normally have become students were sent to the countryside as laborers and missed their education. The Chinese speak of "the lost generation." The development of technology may also lead to a difference between generations. An example is the spread of television, which showed people life in other parts of the world previously outside their perspective.

Social classes carry different class cultures. Social class is associated with educational opportunities and with a person's occupation or profession. Education and occupation are in themselves powerful sources of cultural learning. There is no standard definition of social class that applies across all countries, and people in different countries distinguish different types and numbers of classes. The criteria for allocating a person to a class are often cultural: symbols, such as manners, accents in speaking the national language, and the use and nonuse of certain words, play an important role. The confrontation between the two jurors in *Twelve Angry Men* clearly contains a class component.

Gender, generation, and class cultures can only partly be classified by the dimensions found for national cultures. This is because they are categories of people within social systems, not integrated social systems such as countries or ethnic groups. Gender, generation, and class cultures should be described in their own terms, based on special studies of such cultures.

Organizational Cultures

Organizational, or corporate, cultures have been a fashionable topic in the management literature since the early 1980s. At that time, authors began to popularize the claim that the "excellence" of an organization is contained in the common ways by which its members have learned to think, feel, and act. *Corporate culture* is a soft, holistic concept with, however, presumed hard consequences.

Organization sociologists have stressed the role of the soft factor in organizations for more than half a century. Using the label *culture* for the shared mental software of the people in an organization is a convenient way of repopularizing these sociological views. Yet organizational cultures are a phenomenon by themselves, different in many respects from national cultures. An organization is a social system of a different nature than a nation, if only because the organization's members usually did not grow up in it. On the contrary, they had a certain influence in their decision to join

the organization, are only involved in it during working hours, and will one day leave it.

Research results about national cultures and their dimensions proved to be only partly useful for the understanding of organizational cultures. The part of this book that deals with organizational culture differences (Chapter 8) is not based on the IBM studies but rather on a special research project carried out in the 1980s within twenty organizational units in Denmark and the Netherlands.

Summing Up: Culture as a Phoenix

During a person's life, new body cells continually replace old ones. The twenty-year-old does not retain a single cell of the newborn. In a restricted physical sense, therefore, one could say we have no identity but we are a sequence of cell assemblies. Yet a person has a clear identity, as we all know from firsthand experience. This is because all these cells share the same genes.

At the level of societies, an analogous phenomenon occurs. Our societies have a remarkable capacity for conserving their identity through generations of successive members and despite varied and numerous forces of change. While change sweeps the surface, the deeper layers remain stable, and the culture rises from its ashes like the phoenix.

But what do these deeper layers consist of? There are no genes to carry culture. Culture is the unwritten book with rules of the social game that is passed on to newcomers by its members, nesting itself in their minds. In this book we describe the main themes that these unwritten rules cover. They deal with the basic issues of human social life.