

sixth edition

Marketing Across Cultures

Jean-Claude Usunier and Julie Anne Lee

Marketing Across Cultures

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Sixth edition

Marketing Across Cultures

Jean-Claude Usunier
Julie Anne Lee

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Introduction

Marketing in the global villages

Classical consumer marketing textbooks generally emphasize world markets and are often cross-border extensions of American marketing thought, blatantly ignoring people, languages and cultures and implicitly arguing in favour of uniformity. By contrast, large multinational companies, such as Mars, Pepsi-Cola, L'Oréal or Nestlé, do not in fact follow the traditional textbook recipes: their practice is always much more adaptive to, and respectful of, local contexts. Further, the relatively recent financial shockwaves have left much of the developed world with very low or non-existent growth. This has prompted companies to examine seriously the potential for growth into emerging and developing nations. However, these markets have very different consumers, with very different interests, preferences, purchasing patterns and price sensitivities, very different competitive environments and very different marketing infrastructure.¹

This text offers a different approach to global marketing, based on the recognition of diversity in world markets and on local consumer knowledge and marketing practices. We invite the reader to undertake an exercise in decentering. We try to break out of our 'Francocentric' and 'Aussie-centric' boxes, in much the same way as Gorn² invites us to break out of 'North American boxes'. Understanding international diversity³ in consumer behaviour and marketing management becomes the central teaching objective for an international marketing textbook.

This text adopts an intercultural approach to international marketing; this has two main dimensions:

1. *Comparing* national marketing systems and local commercial customs in various countries, with the aim of emphasizing what is country specific and what is universal, or at least regional. Such an approach is essential for the preparation and implementation of marketing strategies in different national contexts.
2. Studying *interactions* between business people, buyers and sellers (and their companies), who have different national/cultural backgrounds. This intercultural view extends this to include the interactions between consumers from different backgrounds and products (their physical and symbolic attributes, as well as the messages surrounding them). Thus, interaction is meant in a broad sense: not only between people, but also between people and messages, and people and products. In this book, commerce is emphasized as much as marketing. When the word *commerce* is used in this text, it refers to the complex dimensions of business relationships entwined with interpersonal relations.

The basic assumption behind this book is that culture penetrates our inner being subconsciously and at a deep level. World cultures share many common features. Nevertheless, when common elements are combined they all display a unique style, *vis-à-vis* kinship patterns, education systems, valuation of the individual and the group, emphasis on economic activities, friendship patterns, time-related organization patterns, the criteria for aesthetic appreciation, and so on. The examples that are used in this book are by their very nature eclectic. We have chosen examples that seem to be the most striking and pertinent.

This book does not try to describe cultures exhaustively, or from an insider's point of view. What we have attempted to provide for the reader is *a method for dealing with intercultural situations in international marketing*. The underlying postulate of this book is that international marketing relationships have to be built on solid foundations. Transaction costs in international trade are high: only a stable and firmly established link between business people can enable them to overcome disagreements and conflicts of

interest. In international marketing it is advisable to be very methodical and long-term oriented, to select a limited number of partners and opportunities, and to develop them to their fullest extent.

Changes in the sixth edition

The sixth edition has been extensively rewritten. The order of chapters and sections within chapters has changed to improve the readability and flow of ideas. The dramatic increase in the number of cross-cultural and international marketing studies published in the last few years has seen many of the original research findings extended to other cultures, other contexts and integrated with other theories and ideas. Rather than include details of each study, we have summarized the results to present a more cohesive picture (where possible) and referenced examples of the research in the area.

The world is going through a dramatic period of change. These changes include a shift in global power from the West to the East, rising prosperity and growth of the global middle class, especially in emerging economies, increased urbanization and aging of the population and increasing concerns about social and environmental issues.³ As such, the website links have been extended to encourage the reader to search the Internet for relevant up-to-the-moment information.

Target audience

This book is designed for instructors and students who consider global diversity as an asset and an opportunity, rather than a liability or a threat, and who find pleasure in discovering new ways of life and experiencing the challenge of cultural differences in world markets. *Marketing Across Cultures* is particularly useful and relevant in the case of multicultural, multilingual, and multinational classes, institutions and/or countries. This book is to be proposed as a primary textbook for those instructors who want to emphasize culture, sales, negotiations, and a cross-cultural approach to consumer behaviour and market research, and as a secondary text for other IM instructors who want to follow a more traditional approach to international marketing.

The sixth edition has been written for:

- senior undergraduate students who have already studied a marketing management course;
- postgraduate students (MBA in particular) for a cross-cultural/international marketing elective course;
- research students who have an in-depth interest in cultural and comparative aspects of International Business and Global Marketing; and
- senior executives who wish to develop culturally sensitive approaches to global marketing strategy.

For instructors

Additional materials are available for instructors who adopt the text at www.pearsoned.co.uk/usunierlee:

- Electronic forms of all cases with hyperlinks to the cited website for additional information.
- An instructor's manual with pedagogical guidance, answers to the end-of-chapter questions and teaching notes for all cases.
- PowerPoint slides for each chapter.
- A test bank for each chapter.
- Some additional cases and exercises.

All correspondence should be sent to the following email: marketingcrosscultures@gmail.com

Outline

- Part 1, comprising the first four chapters, is devoted to the cultural variable. These chapters try to define it, to delineate the components of culture, and finally to emphasize its dynamic nature. [Chapter 4 on language, culture and communication issues, was previously at the start of Part 4, and has been extensively rewritten and integrated into this section.]
- Part 2 deals with the globalization of markets, which is *the* central issue in international marketing; Chapters 5 and 6 examine consumer behaviour, taking both a local and a global perspective, while Chapter 7 deals with local and regional marketing environments, especially research.
- Part 3 presents the general impact of globalization on international marketing strategies (Chapter 8), with special emphasis on a key issue for product strategy, namely, the dilemma between adaptation

Table I.1 The impact of cultural differences on selected aspects of marketing

Area of marketing	Cultural differences influence . . .	Chapter
Consumer behaviour	Cross-cultural consumer attitudes and decision making	5
	Local consumers and global consumption	6
Market research	Equivalence and methods in cross-national market surveys	7
Marketing strategy	Global versus locally customized marketing strategies	8
Targeting segments	Cross-border vs. country clustering	8
Product	Adaptation or standardization of product attributes	9
Price	Bargaining rituals/Price–quality evaluations/Price strategies towards consumers, competitors and suppliers	10
Distribution	Channel style and service, producer–distributor relationships	11
Brand image	Brand and country-of-origin evaluations by consumers	12
Advertising	Tailoring messages to local audiences' cultural traits	13
Personal selling	Selling styles, sales force management, networking and public relations, bribery and ethical issues in an international context	14

and standardization (Chapter 9). In Chapters 10 and 11, which concern price policies and the choice of distribution channels, emphasis has been deliberately placed on the culture-based approaches to such decisions.

- Part 4 presents marketing communications in an intercultural environment. It starts with Chapter 12, which deals with the complex management of meanings related to brand names for international markets and to country-of-origin images. The next two chapters deal with advertising issues, personal selling, public relations, and bribery and ethical issues in international marketing. Table I.1 presents a summary of the basic contents of Chapters 5 to 14, linking culture to marketing issues.

This book is written from both a European and Australasian viewpoint with many examples relating to these two areas of the world. As with all international marketing texts, this one is not universal. It may be perceived as being less pragmatically written and less issue-oriented than most. Statements may sometimes be classed as value judgements, since they are not always supported by empirical evidence, as is the case in American textbooks. Therefore, this

book may sometimes seem unusual to native English-speaking readers. We regard this approach as part of the message of the book: it is more contextual, and therefore less explicit.

Each chapter concludes with questions and is followed by an appendix comprising some or all of the following: cases, exercises and critical incidents. In addition, many interesting links, cases and exercises have been included on the book's website (www.hec.unil.ch/jusunier/teaching/index.htm) and in the instructor's manual. Since different national versions of this book have been published (Dutch, English, French and German), it may be used in cross-cultural training settings.

Note

- Here, 'diversity' is not meant in its American sense with a strong anti-discrimination stance (reported for instance by Litvin⁴), but rather in its simplest meaning of 'state or quality of being different or varied', with no value judgement about whether 'diversity' is good or bad. In fact, it is neither good nor bad, as shown by Lian and Oneal⁵ through a cross-national study linking cultural diversity to economic development for 98 countries over the 1960–1985 period.

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Part 1

The cultural variable in international marketing





Introduction to Part 1

In an increasingly global world where barriers to trade and international exchange constantly diminish, cultural differences remain the single most enduring factor to influence marketing strategies. Part 1 of this book introduces key concepts in cultural studies that influence our understanding of local markets and the design of international marketing strategies.

Chapter 1 presents the basic elements of culture and introduces ways in which culture impacts international marketing. It provides a discussion of seminal definitions and major aspects of culture, including language and social institutions. It introduces the sources of culture and discusses the limitations in viewing culture as nationality. This chapter also highlights how culture affects the development of skills, and discusses stereotypes, ethnocentrism and our self-reference criteria. The objective of Chapter 1 is to enable readers to understand how their own cultural conditioning colours their interpretation of others. The end-of-chapter teaching materials are designed to reinforce this.

Chapter 2 introduces the cultural dynamics of time and space. These basic cultural assumptions impact many aspects of material culture, such as the sense of ownership, preference for durability, and so on. The chapter begins with a model of action, based on cultural assumptions, which influences individual decision making. It then examines cross-cultural variability in perceptions of time and space. It also looks at the way we ‘borrow’ or integrate foreign items and customs into our societies. The last section examines intercultural hostility towards unknown people, including prejudices and negative stereotypes.

Chapter 3 explains how cultural assumptions influence human interactions. It examines how people define who they are and who others are, which is basic to any culture. A series of issues are then examined including how people differ in their attitudes towards action, how they relate thinking to action, how they deal with desires and feelings, and how they cope with rules. This chapter ends with an examination of how cultural assumptions shape actual behaviour.

Chapter 4 focuses on communication, which is never language-free. It discusses how language, both verbal and non-verbal, shapes our world views, inasmuch as the words we use and the way we assemble them in speech correspond to particular assumptions and experiences about the world in which we live. This can lead to ethnocentrism, which is a spontaneous tendency to refer to our own beliefs and

values when interpreting situations and trying to make sense out of experience. Stereotyping is another way to reduce unfamiliarity by oversimplifying foreign traits. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that misunderstandings in intercultural communication are quite frequent. The last section in this Chapter explains how to avoid cultural misunderstandings and improve communication effectiveness in international business, especially when using interpreters.

The cultural process

Culture has taken a more, rather than less, prominent place in marketing in the twenty-first century. Market growth in affluent, well-developed countries has slowed, and attention has turned toward emerging markets, where the potential is enormous. In many emerging economies, attention is moving from the most affluent – and arguably, the most global – members of society to the growing middle class. However, we know relatively little about how to compete effectively in these markets.

In fact, our understanding of other cultures is often very limited, forcing us to rely on rather shallow or stereotyped ideas. Accordingly, international marketers often resort to using country or nation-states as primary segmentation bases, because borders are easily definable. However, few nations are homogeneous, and many have distinct ethnic, linguistic and religious groups that need to be considered. Culture is complex.

Understanding what is influenced by culture is also more complicated than may initially be expected. While international marketing necessarily gives a prominent place to culture, not everything is culturally driven. Individual behaviour is influenced, but not determined, by culture, as it is only one of the many layers that influence behaviour. However, the influence of culture is difficult to isolate, as it may be hard to recognize from within and to understand from without.

In this chapter we focus on the cultural process and the elements of culture that are likely to impact international business operations. To do this, we explore the following:

1. cultural definitions;
2. the elements of culture, including language, institutions, material productions and symbolic productions and how they fit together to form a coherent culture;
3. the relationship between culture and nationality;
4. the relationship between culture, competence and stereotypes; and
5. self-shock, ethnocentrism and overcoming self-reference criteria.

1.1

Defining culture

In French, the word *culture* was defined by Emile Littré in his nineteenth-century dictionary as ‘cultivation’, meaning to grow, in terms of farming activity. The abstract sense of the word probably originated in Germany where the word *kultur* was used as early as the eighteenth century to refer to civilization. In the Anglo-Saxon world the abstract notion of culture, as cultivation of the mind, came into widespread use at the beginning of the twentieth century. Today, culture is still often defined in terms of the cultivation of the mind. For instance, the *Oxford English Dictionary*’s first definition of culture¹ is ‘the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement’. The second definition is more relevant to this book, as the shared ‘ideas, customs, and social behavior of a particular people or society’. However, these are both rather narrow definitions of culture.

Website link 1.1

Search for alternative definitions of culture, such as the one provided by the Centre for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA):
<http://www.carla.umn.edu/culture/definitions.html>.

Back in 1945, Ralph Linton (p. 21)² suggested a somewhat broader definition of culture:

A culture is the configuration of learned behaviour and results of behaviour whose component elements are shared and transmitted by the members of a particular society.

His emphasis on behaviour is compatible with Clifford Geertz's³ view of culture as the control mechanisms of society (i.e., the plans, recipes, rules and instructions for behaviour), without which people would have difficulty living together. This emphasizes the usefulness of culture to society and to the individual, in that everyday tasks are simplified by the unwritten rules we understand through participation in our society. These unwritten cultural 'rules' lead us to feel that our own cultural norms are *naturally right* and that other different cultural norms are unnatural or strange. For instance, we all know the generally acceptable *right* time to eat dinner or to go to sleep based on our cultural norms, which makes these small everyday decisions relatively easy. However, what is considered to be the *right* time for these activities differs dramatically by culture and subcultures. The inclusion of subcultures highlights the fact that multiple normative solutions to social problems are available in all cultures, but as Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck⁴ argue in the next section, the solutions are differentially preferred.

Particular solutions to universal problems

Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck argue that humans share biological traits and characteristics that lead to a preference for certain solutions to universal problems in society, which are reflected in our cultural values. They argue this on the basis of three assumptions (p. 10):

1. '... there is a limited number of common human problems for which all peoples at all times must find some solution.'

2. 'While there is a variability in solutions of all the problems, it is neither limitless nor random but is definitely variable within a range of possible solutions.'
3. '... all alternatives of all solutions are present in all societies at all times, but are differentially preferred. Every society has, in addition to its dominant profile of value orientations, numerous variant or substitute profiles.'⁴

Similarly, Malinowski described *preferred solutions* to the biological state of hunger, as being dependent on the rules and principles of shared culture (p. 75):

Cultural determination is a familiar fact as regards hunger or appetite, in short the readiness to eat. Limitations of what is regarded as palatable, admissible, ethical; the magical religious, hygienic and social taboos on quality, raw materials, and preparation of food; the habitual routine establishing the time and the type of appetite – all these could be exemplified from our civilization, from the rules and principles of Judaism, or Islam, Brahmanism or Shintoism, as well as from every primitive culture.⁵

Website link 1.2

Search for more information about Malinowski, who championed the modern ethnographic method of long-term fieldwork in the Trobriand Islands from 1915 to 1918, such as on the following website:
<http://www.csiss.org/classics/content/98>.

How culture links the individual to society

While it is important to understand the role that culture plays in the smooth functioning of society and individuals within society, it is also important to understand that individuals have a role in the evolution of their culture. According to Linton (p. 15):

Actually, the role of the individual with respect to society is a double one. Under ordinary circumstances, the more perfect his conditioning and consequent integration into the social structure, the more effective his contribution to the smooth functioning of the whole and the surer his rewards. However, societies have to exist and function in an ever-changing world. The unparalleled ability of our species to adjust to changing conditions and to develop ever more effective responses to familiar ones rests upon the residue

of individuality which survives in every one of us after society and culture have done their utmost. As a simple unit in the social organism, the individual perpetuates the status quo.²

Linton also emphasizes the limits to the cultural programming that society can impose on an individual (p. 14):

No matter how carefully the individual has been trained or how successful his conditioning has been, he remains a distinct organism with his own needs and with capacities for independent thought, feeling and action. Moreover he retains a considerable degree of individuality.²

Clearly, individuals are not simply *programmed* by their culture, as they are free to adopt or adapt the commonly accepted norms of their culture to suit their needs.

We will see this in the many social representations referred to throughout this book, as they are at the intersection of the psychological/individual and social/collective levels. Social representations are forms of operational knowledge, which help us to categorize and interpret circumstances, phenomena, individuals and theories and enable us to make daily decisions. They are constantly updated through our behaviour and social activities, or as a result of the media, public opinion polls, news summaries, court decisions and legal penalties. While social representations are held by individuals, they vary across societies. If we consider Goodenough's definition of culture, as a set of beliefs or standards, shared by a group of people, which help the individual decide what is, what can be, how to feel, what to do and how to go about doing it (i.e., our operational or operating culture),⁶ we can see that there is no reason for culture to be equated with the whole of one particular country or even society. Goodenough's view of operational culture (i.e., shared by those who must cooperate on a task within a given group) is consistent with differing social representations. While social representations are less profound than the basic cultural orientations (e.g., individualism, collectivism and others discussed in Chapters 3 and 4), as they alter within shorter time spans (10 to 20 years versus centuries), they are still important as they are more suited to the urgent need for collective and individual adaptation to reality than cultural orientations.

It is also important to note that many people operate in more than one culture or subculture, including

international business professionals, immigrants, bilinguals, and even teenagers who may switch between their parent and peer cultures. While Goodenough assumes that an individual can choose the culture in which to interact at any given moment or in any given situation, there is a growing body of research that illustrates the pervasiveness of environmental cues that seem to elicit a subconscious switch in operational culture. For instance, researchers have found culturally compatible differences in the way bilinguals respond to the same survey, written in different languages (e.g., Mandarin versus English). Similar differences in response have been found in bicultural individuals (e.g., those who have lived in different countries), when different cues are presented that prime or make one culture more salient, including:

- culturally common symbols (e.g., American flag versus Chinese dragon);
- famous people (e.g., Marilyn Monroe versus a Chinese opera singer);
- landmarks (e.g., the Capitol Building versus the Great Wall); and even
- popular cartoons (e.g., *Superman* versus *Stone Monkey*).⁷

This illustrates the importance of the operational culture in the interpretation of what is *right* for a given situation.

1.2

Elements of culture

A culture must be relatively coherent, so that the sum of its elements reinforces the knowledge, beliefs and values that are useful to its continuation. The four major elements of culture include:

1. language;
2. institutions;
3. material productions; and
4. symbolic productions.

Each of these is discussed below; however, there are many overlaps in influence, as a cultural item may belong to one or more of these four elements of culture simultaneously. For instance, music is a language, an institution, an artistic production and also a symbolic element.

Language as an element of culture

Language is an important element of culture, as it is the primary mechanism for sharing and transmitting information between members of a particular society. However, it is also claimed that the language we learn in our native community shapes and structures our world view and our social behaviour, as it influences how we select issues, solve problems and act.⁸ As a linguist and anthropologist, Benjamin Lee Whorf – a chemical engineer working for a fire insurance company – spent his spare time tracing the origins and grammar of American Indian languages.⁸ He is the author of a seminal, and quite controversial, hypothesis – often referred to as the Whorfian hypothesis or Whorf–Sapir hypothesis – which contends that the structure of language has a significant influence on perception and categorization. Although the Whorfian hypothesis has been criticized by many linguists, it remains a fundamental metaphor, though not a fully validated scientific theory. As such, some aspects of this theory have been incorporated, either explicitly or implicitly, in various parts of this book, especially in Chapter 2, which considers the Whorf–Sapir hypothesis in more detail, as well as broader issues of communication, including context and non-verbal cues. Further consideration is also given to this hypothesis in other chapters, where language and linguistic issues are prominent, such as cross-cultural market research (Chapter 7), branding (Chapter 12), and intercultural marketing communication (Chapters 13 and 14).

Website link 1.3

Search for information about languages around the world, such as Ethnologue and the Santa Fe Institutes' Evolution of Human Language site: <http://www.ethnologue.org>.

Institutions as an element of culture

Institutional elements are the 'spine' of the cultural process that links the individual to the group. Institutions include the family, as well as political institutions, or any kind of social organization that encourages an individual to comply with rules in exchange for various rewards (e.g., being fed, loved, paid, and so on). These rules are not static and individuals may also act as a proactive agent of change within an institution, in a similar way to Linton's arguments in the previous section.

Institutions organize people into groups. While there are many different ways in which an institution can organize people, there are likely to be certain culturally preferred solutions to this problem. For instance, some cultures prefer to organize people into groups that are stable, such as family lineage and gender, whereas others prefer to organize them into more transient groupings, such as their occupation or those with common interests.

BOX 1.1

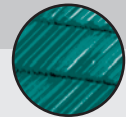
Language groups

While there are about 6000 languages,⁹ many of them are only spoken by a relatively small number of people. The three largest language groups (including dialects), are as follows:

- Chinese languages spoken in 31 countries by 1219 million people;
- Spanish languages spoken in 44 countries by 329 million people; and

- English languages spoken in 112 countries by 328 million people.¹⁰

However, these are not the only languages that should be considered in business, as 389 (6 per cent of the world's languages) are spoken by more than one million people, or almost 94 per cent, of the population.



Malinowski⁵ compiled a list of seven universal principles around which institutions are formed across cultures:

1. The principle of *reproduction* integrates people around blood relationships and marriage as an established contractual framework.
2. The principle of *territoriality* integrates people around common interests dictated by neighbourhood and vicinity.
3. The principle of *physiology* integrates people around their sex, age, and physical traits or defects. This includes the sexual division of labour, sex roles, the relationship patterns between age groups, and the way minority members of the community are treated.
4. The principle of *spontaneous tendency to join together* integrates people around common goals. This includes various kinds of associations, such as primitive secret societies, clubs, artistic societies, etc.
5. The principle of *occupational and professional activities* integrates people around labour divisions and expertise. In modern societies, this includes industry organizations, trade unions, courts, the police, the army, educational institutions and religious bodies.
6. The principle of *hierarchy* integrates people around rank and status, including the nobility, the middle class and slaves, or more generally any kind of social class system or caste system.
7. The principle of *totality* integrates diverse elements into a reasonably coherent whole. The political process (e.g., feudal, democratic, theocratic, dictatorial, etc.) expresses the need for totality.

It is easy to see that individuals belong to more than one level of institution, as each in isolation provides only a limited picture of how a culture operates. To gain a more complete picture, some researchers examine multi-level relationships between institutions and values at the individual level. One such database is the World Values Survey, which tracks basic values and beliefs of various publics within and across countries.

Website link 1.4

Visit the World Values Survey website to learn more about values and cultural changes in societies all over the world: <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org>.

Material productions as an element of culture

The products or outputs of our society also transmit, reproduce, update and improve the knowledge and skills in society.

Primary productions that are elements of culture are varied. They include:

- artistic productions, such as music and art;
- intellectual productions, such as articles and books;
- physical productions, such as factories, tools and machinery, as well as the products we consume (e.g., food, clothing, ornaments); and
- service productions, such as banks, communication, media and education.

All of these productions serve as output and also inputs into our culture.

However, the quantity and quality of productions should not be confused with *civilization*, as indicated by the German word *kultur*. Material consumption and wealth do not necessarily equate with cultural sophistication, and cultural attitudes toward material goods vary enormously. For example, Kumar¹¹ discusses the differing world views in India and China. The Indian world view, based on Brahmanism, has the goal of inner spirituality. It emphasizes spirituality over achievement and does not place a high value on wealth, acquisition or production. Conversely, the Chinese world view is based on Confucian Pragmatism with the goal being harmonious social order. It emphasizes meritocracy and hard work, focusing on action in the material, rather than the spiritual world. Thus, what constitutes success is coloured by our culture.

Symbolic productions as an element of culture

Symbolic and sacred elements of culture determine the relationship between the physical and the metaphysical world. In some cultures, the metaphysical world is present in everyday life, whereas it is denied in other cultures. Cultures, through religious and moral beliefs, often define whether there is life after death and, if so, what kind. The scientific movement, especially at the end of the nineteenth century, seemed close to pushing back the boundaries of the metaphysical world. Nowadays most scientists recognize that the

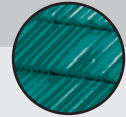
BOX 1.2

Religion and diets

The world's population is approximately distributed among the following religious categories, many of which follow complex dietary practices, some of which are listed as follows:

- 33 per cent are Christian. The Christian faith has relatively few food restrictions, although some refrain from eating meat – fish is usually okay – on Fridays.
- 22 per cent are Muslim. The Muslim faith specifies *Halal* dietary rules. These rules prohibit the consumption of pork, carnivorous animals, sea animals without fins or scales, and any meat that is not prepared in the *Halal* way. Alcohol is not permitted, including products that use alcohol (e.g., vanilla extracts which can be less than 50 per cent alcohol). No food from dawn to sunset during the holy month of Ramadan; however, pregnant women, women who are menstruating, children, and the sick are exempt.
- 14 per cent are Hindu. The Hindu faith prohibits beef, as the cow is considered sacred; Many Hindus are also vegetarian.
- 7 per cent are Buddhist. Strict Buddhists are vegetarians.
- Less than 1 per cent are Sikh, Jewish, or Baha'i. The Sikh faith has relatively few food restrictions, although many are vegetarians. The Jewish faith has a complex set of food practices, which include Kosher preparation. Many foods are prohibited or restricted, including pork, animals which have split hooves and chew the cud (e.g., sheep and cows), and shellfish. Also, meat and dairy should not be eaten together. The Baha'i faith has no dietary restrictions, although the consumption of alcohol and drugs is prohibited.
- 11 per cent are other religions.
- 9 per cent are non-religious.
- 2 per cent are Atheists.

(Source: CIA, *The World Factbook*¹² and the *Butlers Guild*.¹³)



metaphysical question will never be fully resolved by knowledge. What is of interest to us is not the answers to these questions, but how moral and religious assumptions in various cultures impact on individual and group behaviour.

Culture and religion often seem entangled, with noticeable differences between cultures that hold different religious beliefs. Box 1.2 illustrates the sometimes complicated food restrictions that vary greatly between people who follow different faiths. Where societies are relatively homogeneous, these differences can quite dramatically influence a culture, including many aspects of business and marketing.

Website link 1.5

Search for information on religions of the world, such as the Tony Blair Faith Foundation site, which includes a selection of videos that explore the topic of religious identities: <http://www.fgi-tbff.org/> or <http://www.religionfacts.com/>.

Traditional societies have always been more consciously involved in symbolic thought and behaviour than modern societies. Since less is *explained*, more must be *related*. For example: Why does the sun shine every day? Should its disappearance be considered ominous? What should be done to satisfy it, so that it goes on spreading its generous rays on the fields and rivers? The bloody ritual sacrifices in the pre-Columbian civilizations were heavily charged with symbolic content, where human sacrifices were dedicated to the sun. However, we should not overlook symbolic thought in Western societies, where Friday the 13th, black cats, and walking under a ladder can all be considered to bring bad luck. Seemingly harmless beliefs such as these often have a relatively large impact on business. For example, the Stress Management Center and Phobia Institute estimated that over US\$700 million is lost in businesses each Friday 13th, as many people prefer to stay home on this symbolic day.¹⁴ It is a common mistake to believe that the symbolic dimension has largely disappeared in modern life.

Symbols are not only related to religious and metaphysical matters; they also extend into everyday life. Symbols, such as road signs, wedding rings, McDonald's golden arches, or skull and crossbones, are prolific and useful, as they convey a significant amount of information instantly. In each case these symbols are objects that convey something more than the material object itself. Consequently, the interpretation of a symbol is strongly culture bound.

Throughout the book we illustrate the strength of the symbolic dimension, especially in marketing communication, where the symbolisms of colour, shape, labels, brand name, and so on are commonly used to convey additional information about products and services. We also discuss the meaning of numbers in several sections, including consumer behaviour, marketing research and pricing, as there is a growing body of evidence that marketers need to be very aware of the use of auspicious (e.g., 8 in China) and suspicious (e.g., 4 in China and 9 in Japan) numbers, especially in Asia.

Culture as a collective fingerprint and cultural superiority

Culture is a collective fingerprint of our identity. It is made up of a *coherent* set of elements that complement rather than contradict each other. Such individual elements of culture do not exist in isolation and cannot easily be taken out of their context. Further, there are no objectively *good* or *bad* elements of a particular cultural group; it all depends on your subjective view.

Cultures may be evaluated and ranked, but only on the basis of evidence related to a set of *culturally determined criteria* for very specific activities. Some people may make better warriors, others have finer aesthetic judgement, yet others are more musically gifted. However, these elements belong to a *coherent* culture. Comparisons might delude us into thinking we could select the best from each culture and arrive at 'ideal' combinations. However, it is not quite this easy. For instance, a joke about Europeans goes something like this: 'Heaven is where the cooks are French, the mechanics are German, the policemen are English, the lovers are Italian, and it is all organized by the Swiss. Hell is where the policemen are German, the mechanics are French, the cooks are British, the

lovers are Swiss, and it is all organized by the Italians.' While this joke is definitely stereotypical, it does capture some information about long-established cultural capabilities. As such, it serves to remind us how difficult it would be to take what we consider to be the best traits from each culture, while rejecting what we consider to be the worst. Any attempt to combine the best of several cultures would eventually turn out to be a disaster, because *coherence* is needed at the highest level (corresponding to *identity* at the individual level).

1.3

Culture and nationality

Nationality is a relatively easy way to divide individuals into larger groups. However, the relationship between nationality and culture is unclear. While a commonly shared culture is important in building modern nation-states, it is more fundamental at the community level. As soon as nation-states began to emerge, they struggled against local particularisms, such as dialects and customs. Conflicts in large countries are often based on conflicts between cultural subgroups, including the War of Secession in the United States, the rivalry between the English and the Scots in the United Kingdom, the progressive elimination of local powers in the highly centralized French state, and today's struggles between different religious groups in the Middle East and other Asian countries. Each of these conflicts relates to distinctive differences in cultural elements, including language, values, religion, and concepts of freedom.

Businesses must be especially wary of equating culture directly with nation-state, as effective communication is crucial to the marketing process. There is a long list of very good reasons to avoid this, including the following:

1. A country's culture can only be defined by reference to other countries' cultures. India is a country culture in comparison with Italy or Germany, but the Indian subcontinent is made up of highly diversified ethnic and religious groups including Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, and with over 20 principal languages.
2. Many nation-states are explicitly multicultural. For instance, Switzerland has four official languages,

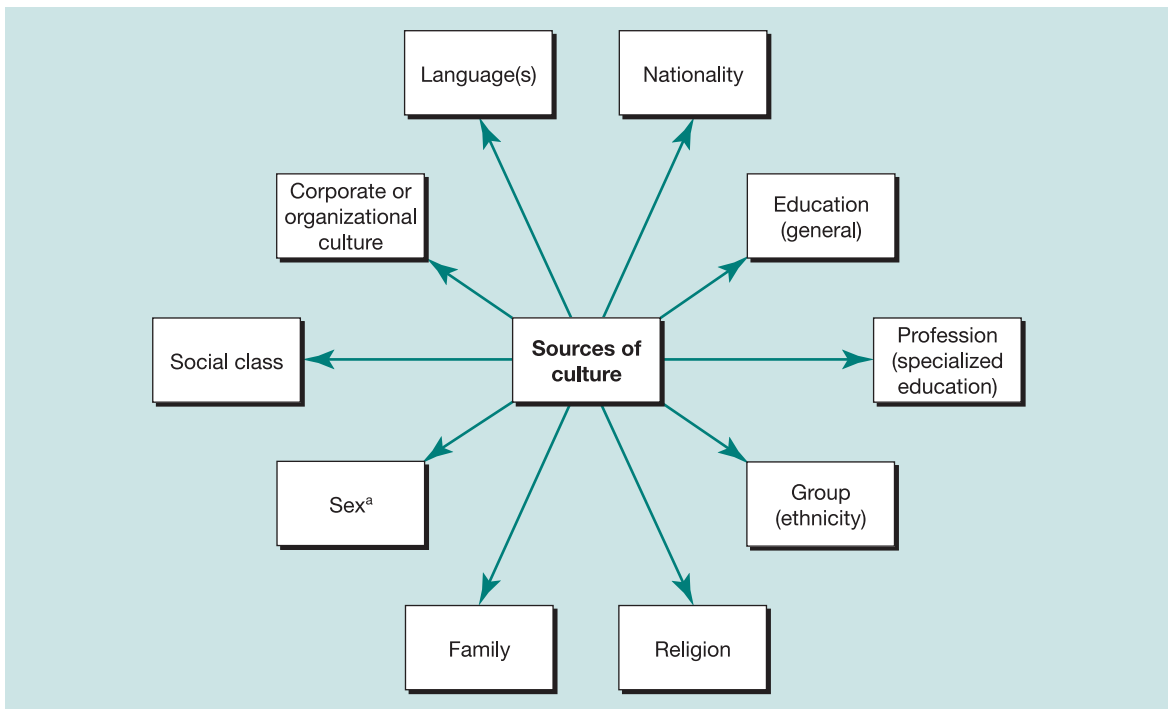
including German, French, Italian and Rumantsch, which are spoken to differing extents in different regions of the country. The Swiss political system, established more than seven centuries ago, helps people to successfully manage the complex trade-off between compliance with local cultural peculiarities and a common attitude towards anything that is not Swiss.

3. Political decisions, especially during the last century, have imposed the formation of new nation-states, particularly through the processes of colonization and decolonization. The borders of these new states, sometimes straight lines on a map, were often set with little regard for cultural realities. Many significant national cultures, such as that of the Kurds (split between the Iraqis, the Syrians, the Turks and the Iranians) have never been accorded the right to a territory or a state.

Sources of culture

The national element is seldom the main source of culture when regarded from an *operational culture* perspective. Figure 1.1 depicts the basic sources of cultural background at the level of the individual. These sources combine to form cultural frames at the individual level, where a medical researcher, or computer hardware specialist, whatever their nationality, share a common specialized education, common interests, and largely the same professional culture. This professional culture is developed through common training, working for similar companies, reading the same publications worldwide and contributing to research where international cross-cultural comparability of purely scientific methods and results is fundamental.

Figure 1.1 Sources of culture



^a In 1948 the anthropologist Margaret Mead published *Male and Female*,²⁵ which draws on her in-depth knowledge of several South Pacific and Balinese cultures. It not only depicts their organization of relationships between men and women, the division of labour and roles in the community, but also explains how these patterns may be compared to those of contemporary American society. *Male and Female*, which has continued to be a best-seller, is an excellent and detailed introduction to sex cultures. Although rarely mentioned in this book, which is principally concerned with territory and national culture, the difference between masculine and feminine culture is in fact the most basic cultural distinction.

Similarly, social class may be a distinctive source of culture, to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the country. In France and England, where there are traditions of accepted birth inequalities and a strong historical orientation, social class is a very distinctive source of culture and the way one speaks immediately reveals one's social class. However, in the United States, Australia, Japan and the Scandinavian countries, this is not as marked. Social class, like gender, is not a territory-based source of culture. In this case, social classes can be transcended.

The sense of belonging to an important ethnic group may override the feeling of belonging to a particular nation-state. The Tamil population in Sri Lanka, which makes up about 20 per cent of the total Sri Lankan population, is mostly centred around Jaffna in the north of the island. It is strongly linked with the large Tamil community in southern India (numbering 55 million), which supports them in their claim for autonomy within their nation-state.

Nations that border other countries are rarely fully homogeneous, as they include 'cross-border' cultures. For instance, the area around the border between France and Spain shares a culture which offers continuity between the two countries: the Basque country to the west and Catalonia to the east. In other cases, elements of each culture have been adopted by people living in border communities. For instance, the Alsatians in France speak mostly German-based dialects and behave very similarly to Germans in the workplace; however, they also lean towards a sense of French nationality and the adoption of the French lifestyle outside the workplace. People who belong to these cross-border cultures often have in-depth knowledge about both cultures, which puts them in a privileged position as exporters from one country to another.

Even physical and climatic conditions can be systematic, although subtle, sources of differentiation. Almost every country is made up of a 'North' and a 'South', where there are somewhat noticeable cultural and lifestyle differences, at least to those within the country. This appears to be the case, even in relatively homogeneous countries that share linguistic, ethnic, religious and institutional views, such as Sweden. However, this difference may not be as strongly perceived by foreigners, who are more aware of their own differences from Swedes and Sweden as a whole.

Cultural homogeneity and relevant segmentation

Firms often find it difficult to decide how to segment international markets, with some targeting transnational ethnic segments, others targeting national segments, and others targeting cross-border regional segments. While Chapter 8 examines the issues around global versus regional marketing strategies, and considers segmentation bases in more detail, a review of the cultural literature can help to identify important information about potential groupings.

While homogeneity clearly favours the emergence of a coherent culture in a nation-state, few countries are truly homogeneous, especially when different types of homogeneity are considered, such as:

1. linguistic homogeneity;
2. religious homogeneity;
3. ethnic homogeneity;
4. climatic homogeneity;
5. geographical homogeneity;
6. institutional and political homogeneity; and
7. social/income homogeneity.

In fact, the word 'homogeneity' has many different meanings, including:

1. The existence of a uniform modality throughout the whole population (e.g., only one religion, or one language) or at the very least limited diversity.
2. An accepted diversity that is officially recognized and supported by the State. For instance, more than one official language in common use, being more or less spoken and/or understood by everybody (e.g., Canada), or several different well-accepted religions (e.g., Germany).
3. A strong 'perceived homogeneity', which is built upon acceptable differences within the national community, such as people accepting large differences in wealth and income, on the basis of fatalism, indifference or on metaphysical grounds.

From this, it is easy to see that global homogenization is unlikely. However, the elements that tie subcultures together can strengthen nationality. For instance, Sweden is culturally more homogeneous than the United States, and as such might be expected to hold a stronger national identity, but in reality it is the United States that has a stronger national identity than Sweden.¹⁵

The concept of national culture

National culture relies on the concept of within-country homogeneity and between-country differences. As such, it is primarily a starting point for uncovering cultural differences between countries. Several different national culture frameworks report a wide range of countries scores or positions, on a relatively small number of conceptually complex constructs, including those by Geert Hofstede,¹⁶ the World Values Survey,¹⁷ Shalom Schwartz,¹⁸ the GLOBE¹⁹ and Fons Trompenaars.²⁰ To date, Hofstede's original framework has been used most extensively to investigate a wide range of business issues, including many aspects of marketing. This framework initially derived four dimensions of national culture (individualism/collectivism, power distance, masculinity/femininity and uncertainty avoidance) from a large study of IBM employees, and later, Hofstede and colleagues²¹ added a fifth (long-term/short-term orientation) based on the work on Michael Bond and colleagues²² and then a sixth (indulgence/restraint) based on the work of Michael Minkov²³ and the World Values Survey. These and other dimensions of national culture are described in more detail in the following chapters and referred to throughout the book, as a relatively large body of cross-cultural work relates these dimensions to phenomenon of interest to marketers. However, we need to keep in mind that national culture scores only offer a broad brushstroke of information. Further, they can be difficult to interpret, as a moderate score at the national level could represent a pervasive moderate level of importance, or a great deal of variability in the population.

In reality, culture has many levels or layers, which more often correspond to linguistic, ethnic, religious or even organizational entities than to nation-states. National culture is too general to avoid the traps of cliché and stereotype; however, it is useful, in that it is difficult for anyone to understand the nuances of multiple cultures. Thus, despite its limitations, the concept of national culture can still be an interesting Pandora's box.

Website link 1.6

Search for information on national cultural dimensions, such as those from Geert Hofstede. Try comparing your home country to a country you would like to visit: <http://geert-hofstede.com/countries.html>.

One of the important questions around culture is how it influences individuals. Some believe that culture has a distinct imprint on individuals, in that personality traits exist for which the average individual in one culture scores significantly higher (or lower) than those belonging to another culture. This corresponds to the idea of national character or, more precisely, the concept of a modal personality. The modal personality approach largely grew out of enquiries as to why certain people are more violent, more aggressive, more domineering, and collectively more prone than others to declare war on foreign nations or to organize and implement genocide. These questions stemmed from the Second World War, especially the Nuremberg trials. Numerous empirical studies have been undertaken, particularly during the 1950s and 1960s, to examine the process of forming a national character (e.g., examining child-rearing practices, education systems, and the socialisation process of children). The results neither prove nor disprove the existence of national character.

Others favour the idea that personality traits are largely free from the influence of culture. According to Linton (pp. 14–15),² the individual's 'integration into society and culture goes no deeper than his learned responses, and although in the adult the greater part of what we call the personality, there is still a good deal of the individual left over'. The question of whether personality is modal (culture-bound) or culture-free is not just academic. In Linton's view, individuals may have personalities quite separate from their cultural background. From a 'national character' perspective, one would expect to meet people with an average personality that reflects their culture. Obviously, this is not the case.

National character and educational practices

In order to study how national character is formed, education systems and child-rearing practices may be observed, especially in the early years (up to the age of five or six). Key elements of personality develop during this time, due to feeding and nourishing, weaning, personal hygiene and toilet training, the degree and modes of socialization into various parts of the community (with other children, with adults, with the opposite sex), the demands and prohibitions

imposed on small children, and finally the reward/sanction systems, all of which orientate behaviour.⁴

Formal education has a role in cultural transmission, as well as the teaching of academic knowledge and skills. This can take various forms, including hidden or implicit socialization aspects. For instance, in addition to teaching language skills, the stories in commonly used texts often convey cultural messages, such as those found by Imada, to be consistent with the individualist or collectivist tendencies in the US and Japan (pp. 11–12):²⁴

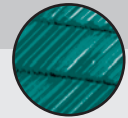
American stories provide a role model who is a strong, distinctive individual, capable of achieving what he or she really wants, whereas Japanese stories teach children to be kind, considerate, an altruistic member of the group, and to recognize the importance of friendship . . . American stories contained more features that reflect individualistic cognitive styles, such as taking a first-person perspective, focusing on

success, making dispositional and self-serving attributions, and emphasizing happiness, than did Japanese stories. In contrast, Japanese stories contained more features that reflect collectivistic cognitive styles, such as taking a third-person perspective, focusing on failure, making situational and self-critical attribution, and balancing happiness and sadness, than did American stories.

School systems also reinforce appropriate behaviour. For instance, Margaret Mead's²⁵ view is that the United States 'adolescent peer culture' is shaped by education systems that favour diffuse, depersonalized authority where children need to have their own strong inner moral control. As adults, the cheerful, easy-going, informal Americans are often jokingly referred to by in many other countries as resembling big children. This is in stark contrast with Amy Chua's description of the Chinese Tiger Mother, an extract of which is described in Box 1.3.

BOX 1.3

Extract from the *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*



'A lot of people wonder how Chinese parents raise such stereotypically successful kids. They wonder what these parents do to produce so many math whizzes and music prodigies, what it's like inside the family, and whether they could do it too. Well, I can tell them, because I've done it. Here are some things my daughters, Sophia and Louisa, were never allowed to do:

- attend a sleepover;
- have a playdate;
- be in a school play;
- complain about not being in a school play;
- watch TV or play computer games;
- choose their own extracurricular activities;
- get any grade less than an A;
- not be the No. 1 student in every subject except gym and drama;
- play any instrument other than the piano or violin;
- not play the piano or violin.

I'm using the term 'Chinese mother' loosely. I know some Korean, Indian, Jamaican, Irish and Ghanaian parents who qualify too. Conversely, I

know some mothers of Chinese heritage, almost always born in the West, who are not Chinese mothers, by choice or otherwise. I'm also using the term 'Western parents' loosely. Western parents come in all varieties.

All the same, even when Western parents think they're being strict, they usually don't come close to being Chinese mothers. For example, my Western friends who consider themselves strict make their children practice their instruments 30 minutes every day. An hour at most. For a Chinese mother, the first hour is the easy part. It's hours two and three that get tough.' . . .

Western parents try to respect their children's individuality, encouraging them to pursue their true passions, supporting their choices, and providing positive reinforcement and a nurturing environment. By contrast, the Chinese believe that the best way to protect their children is by preparing them for the future, letting them see what they're capable of, and arming them with skills, work habits and inner confidence that no one can ever take away.'

(Source: Amy Chua, pp. 3–4.²⁶ Amy Chua is a Professor of Law at Yale Law School. Visit Amy Chua's website: <http://amychua.com/>.)

1.4

Culture, competence and stereotypes

Early research on the intellectual abilities of non-European people classified the thought patterns of primitives as ‘pre-logical’. Little by little this somewhat extreme attitude, that ‘primitives’ could never understand things as we do (‘we’ being the modern, Westernized people of European origin), has given way to a more reasonable position. We now know that scores on intelligence quotient (IQ) tests are relative to the type of questions asked and the situations evoked in the verbal part of the test (reading, memorization and understanding of texts). Even quantitative aspects of IQ tests (i.e., mathematics, geometry, statistics, logic), require a familiarity with handling abstract and mathematical signs. There is no test that is universally relevant, in that it encompasses all the possible facets of human intelligence, or offers total objectivity in the experimental and empirical methods used to evaluate them. Definitions of intelligence are culturally contingent, and as such, IQ scores differ across cultures in predictable ways. While intelligence tests can have practical benefits, IQ scores should be interpreted cautiously when tests devised by one culture are administered to people from other cultures.

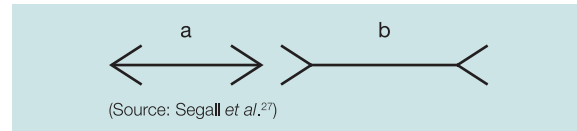
Website link 1.7

Why not try a free web-based IQ test?:
<http://www.ifreeiqtest.com/>.

Skills and our environment

The environment in which we live influences our perceptions, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour. For instance, there are clear differences in people’s perception of visual illusions that are attributed to their physical environment. Figure 1.2 depicts two equal lines; however, line ‘a’ had to be almost 1/5 longer than line ‘b’ before American students perceived them as equal, whereas people from the Kalahari accurately perceived their equality.²⁷ This difference is attributed to exposure to recurrent features of our physical environment, with the emphasis on straight

Figure 1.2 Müller-Lyer illusion



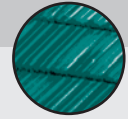
lines and sharp angles in a constructed environment and more rounded and curvilinear shapes in a more natural setting.¹⁵

Our physical environment also influences our culture. Some cultures are considered to be more work orientated and more efficient when it comes to producing material goods, which has often explained by environmental factors, such as climate. Box 1.4 contains the beginning of Montesquieu’s theory of climates.²⁸ While the physiological explanations are scarcely credible now, it is nevertheless a starting point for the north/south climatic stereotype. The question is: do some countries/climates tend to harden (or soften) people, with the result that they become more (or less) inclined towards activities of war, commerce or industry, and more (or less) efficient in pursuing these activities? For instance, a hot climate may directly influence culture, by physically discouraging effort and action, or indirectly influence culture through adaptation to climatic conditions, such as the development of air conditioners and heaters. If climate has both a direct and an indirect influence, via progressive genetic adaptation and/or cultural traits acquired through education and socialization, then air conditioning may be necessary but not enough to counter climatic differences. For instance, climate has been found to have an indirect effect on a country’s competitiveness, as temperate countries are more likely to overpay their workers, relative to their standing on the worldwide ladder of wealth.²⁹

Stereotypes

While our cultural or normative knowledge helps us to make sense of the world, stereotypes serve as simplified intellectual representations of other people; however, they also tend to promote our differences, which can make them dangerous. Michel Droit, in his book *Chez les Mangeurs D’Hommes (The Man Eaters)*, exposes the stereotype of the sorcerer in primitive societies. He describes the people of Papua New Guinea through the eyes of civilized observers

BOX 1.4



Of the difference of men in different climates

A cold air^a constricts the extremities of the external fibres of the body; this increases their elasticity, and favors the return of the blood from the extreme parts to the heart. It contracts^b those very fibres; consequently, it increases also their force and elasticity. People are therefore more vigorous in cold climates. Here the action of the heart and the reaction of the extremities of the fibres are better performed, the temperature of the humors is greater, the blood moves freer towards the heart, and reciprocally, the heart has more power. This superiority of strength must produce various effects; for instance, a greater boldness, that is, more courage; a greater sense of superiority, that is, more frankness, less suspicion, policy, and cunning. In short, this must be productive of very different tempers. Put a man into a close warm place, and, for the reasons above given, he will feel a great faintness. If, under this circumstance, you propose a bold enterprise to him, I believe you will find him very little disposed

towards it: his present weakness will throw him into a despondency; he will be afraid of every thing, being in a state of total incapacity. The inhabitants of warm countries are, like old men, timorous; the people in cold countries are, like young men, brave. If we reflect on the late^c wars, (which are more recent in our memory, and in which we can better distinguish some particular effects, that escape us at a greater distance of time), we shall find that the northern people, transplanted into southern regions,^d did not perform such exploits as their countrymen who, fighting in their own climate, possessed their full vigor and courage.

^a This appears even in the countenance: in cold weather people look thinner.

^b We know it shortens iron.

^c Those for the succession to the Spanish monarchy.

^d For instance in Spain.

(Source: Montesquieu, pp. 224–5.²⁷)

who are necessarily their ideological enemies (Droit, p. 124, J.-C. Usunier translation):

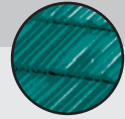
Armed with tamed snakes which they use to execute their victims, with poisons, enchanted prayers and medicinal herbs known only to them, sorcerers, through well-organized propaganda and strong co-operative solidarity, let entire populations live in fear and sometimes in terror of their ‘nepou’, that is their evil powers.³⁰

This does not necessarily mean that Michel Droit’s description of the sorcerer is false. He reveals part of reality, but also ignores how the sorcerer is an integral part of Papuan communities.

Similarly, when the French perceive Americans as being arrogant and tough in business, and the British as insincere, it is likely that this stereotypical oversimplification also has an emotional function as self-defence against a difference that provokes anxiety.³¹ American arrogance is, in fact, related to a different hierarchy of values, where professional relations are centred on the task at hand or the object of discussion to the exclusion of personal relations with the other party.

Stereotypes are often used to capture the salient traits of a ‘foreign’ national character, as could be seen in the stereotypical joke in Section 1.2. However, they are seldom very accurate, as Soutar and colleagues³² found when they asked experienced Australian and Japanese international businesspeople to estimate the most important values of their own culture, as well as those of other culture. For instance, Japanese business people reported that their relationships with others was the most important value listed, whereas Australian businesspeople felt this was much less important to the Japanese than other values, such as being well respected, having a sense of belonging and security.³² Further, stereotypes differ quite dramatically across cultures, as can be seen in Box 1.5, which shows how French people are viewed (at least stereotypically) by people from other nations.

Finally, Yoshida (p. 1)³³ relates an amusing anecdote of a European professor who assigned students from different nationalities to submit a report on elephants. Stereotypical submissions included: ‘A philosophical analysis of the existence of the elephant’ from a German

BOX 1.5**Stereotypes of the French**

How various nationalities perceive the French:

The Germans: Pretentious and offhand. Fashionable, womanizing, frivolous, fickle, well-mannered, resourceful.

The British: Nationalistic, chauvinistic, intransigent, centralist, dependent on the state, polite but not open-minded, humourless, short-tempered.

The Dutch: Cultured, fond of good living, fidgety, talkative, not very serious, feelings of superiority.

The Spanish: Pretentious, early sleepers, cold and distant, hypocritical, impolite, patronizing, hard working.

The Swedish: In-built superiority complex, scornful, boastful, talkative, immoral, dirty, neo-colonialists, disorganized, cultured gastronomy, suffocating hierarchy.

The Finns: Xenophobic, superficial, scornful, chauvinistic, courteous, romantic, enjoying life, patriotic, chaotic.

The Americans: Chauvinistic, well-mannered. Combination of good food and good conversation, Paris. Curious about foreign people, pretentious, talkative, pleasant, intelligent.

The Russians: Talkative, self-satisfied, lazy. Luxury, inequality, culture. Pleasant, intelligent, resourceful.

The North Africans: Fairly racist, a little stingy, reasonably honest. Good education and good food. Selfish.

The Asians: Exhibitionist, indiscreet. Reticent in making friends. Bureaucracy and red tape.

The Black Africans: Racist, honest, lacking respect for elders and betters. At odds with themselves and nature. Not spontaneously hospitable.

(Source: Gruère and Morel, p. 51.³⁴)

student, 'How to raise an elephant in your backyard for money and fun without risk of litigation' from an American student, 'A comparative analysis of elephant studies in foreign countries, particularly Europe and America: what the Elephant thinks of us Japanese' from a Japanese student, and a Chinese student simply submitted a recipe.

Website link 1.8

Search for blogs about stereotypes from different perspectives:
<http://en.wordpress.com/tag/stereotype/>.

1.5**Ethnocentrism and self-reference criteria**

Living according to one's culture in daily life is almost an unconscious action. The cost of adopting the cultural norms in your own culture is minimal; however,

the costs, in terms of the amount of effort associated with the identification and adoption of the traits of another culture are much higher. This is clear in the difficulties encountered by immigrants, even those who have immigrated voluntarily.

Culture-shock and self-shock

Self-shock extends the concept of culture-shock, which is considered to be a reaction to difference, to a reaction to differences with and within the self.³⁵ When people from different cultures meet, such as expatriate managers meeting local executives or international sellers meeting local buyers, the interaction can create uncertainty. At first it may seem that the basic problem is simply reducing uncertainty by 'getting to know the other'. But as Alder (p. 18)³⁶ describes, there is in fact a 'progressive unfolding of the self' in an intercultural encounter, which can be attributed to 'a set of intensive and evocative situations in which the individual perceives and experiences other people in a distinctly new manner and, as a consequence, experiences new facets and dimensions of existence'.

Facing foreigners may disturb our personal identity or self-image through the ‘mirror effect’ – that is, self-image is constructed from our perceptions of others’ voiced opinions and behavioural responses to us. Our ability to maintain an enduring self-concept relies on ‘the resemblance and continuity of the image and the sense that others have of us’ (p. 13).³⁷ In a monocultural setting, ‘self-image’ is built unconsciously based on reflections of known others. However, in an intercultural setting where the ‘mirror’ is foreign, maintaining our personal identity can be problematic as it: (1) is unconscious, (2) requires sound intercultural understanding, and (3) requires good communication skills.

The root of ‘self-shock’ lies in the relationship between the ego (that is, personal identity), personal behaviour, and the ‘other’ (as the ‘other’ actually is, and as the ‘other’ is perceived by the ego). Self-shock results from a deep imbalance between the need to confirm personal identity and the ability to do so. The intercultural self-shock situation increases the need to reinforce our personal identity, while at the same time resulting in a loss of ability to satisfy this need. This often results in a self-defence mechanism to avoid the painful double constraint of self-shock which leads to abrupt stereotypical judgements about foreigners. For instance, Gauthey (p. 64)³⁸ cites a general manager of a software company, a subsidiary of a French advertising and communications group, who says: ‘I can’t stand the English, and when I go to London, I never leave the airport.’ This attitude is clearly defensive: in refusing to leave the airport, he remains on neutral international ground, refusing to run the risk of being confronted by the image that the English will have of him.

Ethnocentrism and self-reference criterion

The concept of ethnocentrism was first introduced by G.A. Sumner³⁹ more than 80 years ago, to distinguish between *ingroups* (those groups with which an individual identifies) and *outgroups* (those regarded as antithetical to the *ingroup*). Sumner defined ethnocentrism as a tendency for people to perceive their own group as the centre and to scale and rate outgroups with reference to their own group. In its most extreme form, ethnocentrism relates to beliefs about

the superiority of one’s own culture, which may lead to lack of interest in, and even contempt for, the culture of other groups.⁴⁰

In a less extreme form, it relates to the natural tendency of people to refer their own standards, including the symbols, values and ways of thinking of their own ethnic or national group and to judge others according to these norms. James Lee⁴¹ termed this tendency as our Self-Reference Criterion (SRC). He argued that we all have an automatic and unconscious tendency to refer to our own thought framework – which is mainly tied to our national culture – to interpret situations, evaluate people, communicate, negotiate or decide which attitude to take. This framework is generally modelled by ethnocentrism, which is also discussed in Chapter 10 in relation to country-of-origin effects.

Ethnocentric SRC tendencies can be reduced or eliminated with some effort. Lee⁴¹ suggests the following steps in order to try to correct the decisional bias related to our SRC, when dealing with international operations:

1. Define the problem or the objectives, as would be done according to the customs, behavioural standards and ways of thinking of the decision maker’s country.
2. Similarly, define the problem or the objectives as would be done according to the customs, behavioural standards and ways of thinking of the foreign country.
3. Isolate the influence of the self-reference criterion on the problem, and identify the extent to which it complicates the decision-making problem.
4. Redefine the problem (and often the objectives), without the bias related to the SRC and then find the solutions and make decisions that fit with the cultural context of the foreign market.

The first two points are illustrated in the following situation. People are standing in line at an amusement park, such as Disneyland, where there are some very popular attractions. In the original context in the US, discipline with respect to queues is strong. They are usually well organized and there are even tangible indications for this (e.g., yellow lines on the ground indicating where people should stop to queue, tape or bars that are visibly present to help form queues). In the foreign context of France, where there is a developed sense of ‘free-for-all’ and less of a habit of organized queues (combined with a resistance to

anything that seems too socially structured), discipline with respect to queues cannot be assumed. If Americans in France rely on their SRC criteria, they are likely to become rapidly frustrated. However, if they redefine the problem and objectives outside their SRC, they may be better placed to find an amicable solution to overcome the problem. However, this depiction of the SRC includes some degree of naivety and inadequacy, as it assumes that a culture's mysteries can be easily understood.

Cultural expertise is a complex reality. Sometimes neither marketing experts from the home (in total ignorance) nor host (through lack of consciousness of their own culture) countries are capable of the diagnosis required to correct the decisional bias related to our SRC, especially in steps 3 and 4. Further, removing the bias effect using the SRC approach does not always result in immediate outcomes. Billikopf,⁴² who was tutored on Russian culture and talked to interpreters about appropriate behaviour in various situations, describes his first trip to Russia. On one of these occasions the interpreter explained that a gentleman must always be courteous to ladies, such as pouring her *limonad*. Later, he tried to use this reasoning when he offered his host's wife a banana. When she smiled and said yes without reaching for one, he picked one for her and peeled it half way before he handed it to her. His host's smile told him he had done the right thing. On a later trip he was informed that: 'In Russian, when a man peels a banana for a lady it means he has a romantic interest in her' (p. 1).⁴² Billikopf further cautions that generalizations about eye-contact, personal space, touch and interest in participation, especially based on faulty observation, can be dangerous.

It is important to realize that even those who immerse themselves in another culture do not fully understand the nuances, as they are often conditioned throughout childhood. As Gauthey (p. 63)³⁸ states: 'It seems a thousand times easier to stay attached to our own values and to transfer onto the foreigner the responsibility to change his point of view than to decenter ourselves, that is to leave our system of reference and put ourselves in the place of the other.'

Racism

Racism is often confused with cultural hostility. Racism precedes cultural hostility, but cultural hostility does

not necessarily imply racism. People may be hostile to those from another culture without being a racist. There is a theory behind racism: that, because of their race (i.e., physiology), some human beings are inferior in terms of intelligence, creative abilities, moral sense, or some other factor. The theories of Gobineau and Hitler's *Mein Kampf* are writings that clearly developed and propagated racist views.

Website link 1.9

Hitler is known as the consummate all-time terrorist – learn more through his memoir, *Mein Kampf*: <http://www.roadtopeace.org/index.php?itemid=125>.

Cultural hostility

In contrast to racism, cultural hostility does not imply prior prejudices as to who is inferior or superior according to race or culture. Culture is part of a person's heritage. There is a strong affective dimension, when a person's cultural values are threatened. This emotional response may result from:

1. Simple interactions with people whose cultural values are quite different. This may lead to feelings of unease, difficulty in communication and lack of empathy. A defensive response may develop, in terms of minor and unconscious cultural hostility.
2. Collective reactions to groups that are culturally different. Cases are so numerous worldwide that it would need many pages to list them exhaustively. A few examples include Transylvanian Hungarians and Romanians, people in ex-Yugoslavia, Armenians of High Karabakh and Azeris of the Azerbaijan enclave in Soviet Armenia; Walloons and Flemings in Belgium; Protestant and Catholic communities in Ulster. *Identity is a matter of culture rather than race.*

It is not only territorial conflicts but also economic competition that may cause cultural hostility, especially when combined with cultural differences. For instance, some negative feelings toward the Japanese in the United States were generated by media about the large trade imbalance, combined with culturally based Japanese protectionism. Despite the large trade imbalance with China, there seems to be less economic animosity, thank, to lower levels of protectionism.

Cultural hostility directed at successful nations is often a fairly ambiguous feeling, where admiration and envy for the other's achievements go along with contempt for many traits of the envied people and an unwillingness to understand the root causes of the other's success. This may also result in naive copies of selected cultural artefacts as magical ways of becoming stronger: in *Robinson Crusoe* savages were about to eat Man Friday in order to gain his qualities.

Chapter 4 of this book further examines the mechanism of cultural hostility, which is sometimes increased by language and communication problems. Intercultural misunderstandings may stem from a lack of competency in the other's language, or from the natural tendency to adopt defensive stereotypes. This often results in a snowballing cultural hostility.



Questions

1. In light of the definitions of culture given in this chapter, is it possible for a culture to disappear? Why, or why not? Give an example.
2. A common problem, across cultures, is to attract/be attractive for potential partners. Discuss how, in Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's terms, there is a range of possible solutions, and how they are differentially preferred across societies. Outline possible consequences for marketing.
3. Discuss the case of multi-language/multi-religion countries (e.g., India, Canada, Switzerland). How can people in these countries share a common culture? Are there any identifiable segments of culture within these countries?
4. Discuss the role of education (at home, at school and elsewhere) in the transmission of culture.
5. What is a *national character* and how is it useful to marketers?
6. Can you describe at least one circumstance when you had an ethnocentric attitude? If you find it hard, can you explain why?
7. Discuss the following statements from Gannon (1994, pp. 5 and 68) on stereotyping:

'Many Germans, for instance, do not like to converse much during their meals. Germans will ordinarily begin their meals by taking a sip of beer or soda and then picking up and holding knives and forks throughout the meal, putting them down only when they are finished eating. For many Germans eating is a serious business that is not to be disturbed by trivial comments and animated conversation.'

'Germans also frequent the symphony on a regular basis; the former West Germany with its population of 62 million boasts approximately 80 symphony orchestras . . . This societal and cultural love of music has produced some of the finest composers of classical symphonic music. In fact, many experts agree that the classical symphony reached its highest level of attainment and maturity in the works of Haydn and Mozart.'¹⁴³

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Appendix 1

Teaching materials

A1.1 Critical incident

An old lady from Malaysia

The frail, old, almost totally blind lady appeared at every clinic session and sat on the dirt floor enjoying the activity. She was dirty and dishevelled, and obviously had very little, even by Malaysian kampong (local village) standards.

One day the visiting nurse happened upon this woman in her kampong. She lived by herself in a rundown shack about 10 by 10 feet [3×3 m]. When questioned how she obtained her food, she said she was often hungry, as she only received food when she worked for others – pounding rice, looking after the children, and the like.

The nurse sought to obtain help for the woman. It was finally resolved that she would receive a small pension from the Department of Welfare which would be ample for her needs.

At each weekly clinic, the woman continued to appear. She had become a centre of attention, laughed and joked freely, and obviously enjoyed her increased prestige. No change was noted in her physical status, however. She continued to wear the same dirty black dress and looked no better fed.

The nurse asked one of the rural health nurses to find out if the woman needed help in getting to a shop to buy the goods she seemed so sorely in need of.

In squatting near the woman, the rural health nurse noted a wad of bills in the woman's pocket. 'Wah,' she said, 'It is all here. You have spent nothing. Why is that?'

The woman laughed and then explained: 'I am saving it all for my funeral.'

(Source: Weeks *et al.*, pp. 24–5.¹)

A1.2 Critical incident

The parable

The leader tells the following parable to the group, illustrating with rough chalkboard drawings if desired:

Rosemary is a girl of about 21 years of age. For several months she has been engaged to a young man – let's call him Geoffrey. The problem she faces is that between her and her betrothed there lies a river. No ordinary river mind you, but a deep, wide river infested with hungry crocodiles.

Rosemary ponders how she can cross the river. She thinks of a man she knows who has a boat. We'll call him Sinbad. So she approaches Sinbad, asking him to take her across. He replies, 'Yes, I'll take you across if you'll spend the night with me.' Shocked at this offer, she turns to another acquaintance, a certain Frederick, and tells him her story. Frederick responds by saying, 'Yes, Rosemary, I understand your problem – but – it's your problem, not mine.' Rosemary decides to return to Sinbad, spends the night with him, and in the morning he takes her across the river.

Her reunion with Geoffrey is warm. But on the evening before they are to be married, Rosemary feels compelled to tell Geoffrey how she succeeded in getting across the river. Geoffrey responds by saying, 'I wouldn't marry you if you were the last woman on earth.'

Finally, at her wit's end, Rosemary turns to our last character, Dennis. Dennis listens to her story and says, 'Well, Rosemary, I don't love you . . . but I will marry you.' And that's all we know of the story.

(Source: Weeks *et al.*, pp. 24–5.)

Discussion guide

1. Before any discussion, participants should be asked to write down individually on a piece of paper the characters of whose behaviour they most approve, plus a sentence or two explaining their first choice.
2. Participants may be split into small groups of four or five, to share their views and raise relevant issues.
3. The discussion should centre on the cultural relativity of values and their relation to one's own cultural background.

A1.3 Reading

Body rituals among the Naciremas

Website link A1.1

Text for this reading is located on the book website: www.pearsoned.co.uk/usunierlee.

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Cultural dynamics 1: time and space

If we adopt Selma Lagerlöf's definition of culture as 'what remains when that which has been learned is entirely forgotten' (my translation of the aphorism attributed to Selma Lagerlöf by Karl Petit, p. 100) from Karl Petit,¹ culture may appear to be a vague and practically limited concept. Its main use would be as a 'synthesis variable': an explanation that serves as a last resort. It would also serve as an explanatory variable for residuals, when other explanations are unsuccessful. However, Lagerlöf's definition usefully identifies two basic elements of cultural dynamics at the individual level:

1. Culture is learned.
2. Culture is forgotten, in the sense that we cease to be conscious of its existence as a learned behaviour.

Yet culture remains present throughout our daily activities. Culture represents our adaptation to reality, based on complex interactions between values, attitudes and behavioural assumptions. Cultural differences arise from preferences for solutions to common human problems, which form cultural norms in society. Despite changes to our natural and social environments, which expose our culture to new solutions, cultural preferences have strong roots and cultural change is relatively slow, with the gaps between cultures appearing to be fairly stable.^{2,3} However, cultural norms serve as constraints and opportunities rather than dictating how individuals act. Culture is normative rather than deterministic. As such, cultural frameworks and theories provide a valuable starting point to understand the impact of culture as a cohesive whole. This information can then be modified based on additional information about individuals and specific situations, which may interact to influence behaviour.

In this chapter we describe different cultural solutions to the universal problems of how to deal with time, space and concepts of the self and others. Rather than focus on one particular cultural theory, we integrate dimensions proposed in commonly cited cultural theories, such as those proposed by Hall,^{4,5,6,7} Hofstede,² Inglehart,⁸ Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck,⁹ Schwartz,¹⁰ House,¹¹ and Trompenaars.¹² While we give some country-specific illustrations where a particular solution is likely to be considered obviously 'right' or fluent with the countries' culture, it is important to remember that *alternative solutions* are available in any society. The objective here is not to classify countries or cultures, but rather to expose the reader to a set of learned assumptions that explain how cultural norms differ and to present readers with the opportunity to contrast these differences with their own learned cultural assumptions to enhance cross-cultural learning.

Cross-cultural learning involves examining different cultural 'mindsets' which contain culturally-congruent content, procedures and goals.¹³ While it is possible to develop cultural awareness from reading materials written from a culturally alien perspective, it takes conscious, deliberative, reflective thinking to examine and understand both your own and the other cultures' perspectives. Cultural assumptions are not completely in the realm of *Unbewußtsein* (unconsciousness, deep-seated and inaccessible); they are rather in the realm of *Unterbewußtsein*, which is located at a subconscious level, where interaction and self-questioning can reveal them. As such, exposure to different cultural solutions, along with a concerted effort to understand, compare and contrast them in a non-evaluative manner, can lead to a deeper level of cultural understanding.

In Section 2.1 we propose a model of action based on different cultural assumptions. These cultural assumptions (depicted in Figure 2.1) are described in this and the next chapter. We then discuss major cultural assumptions around the concepts of time (Section 2.2), space (Section 2.3) and self and others (Section 2.4). Finally, in Section 2.5 we highlight culture as both a chronically and situationally accessible, multi-level, multi-layered construct.

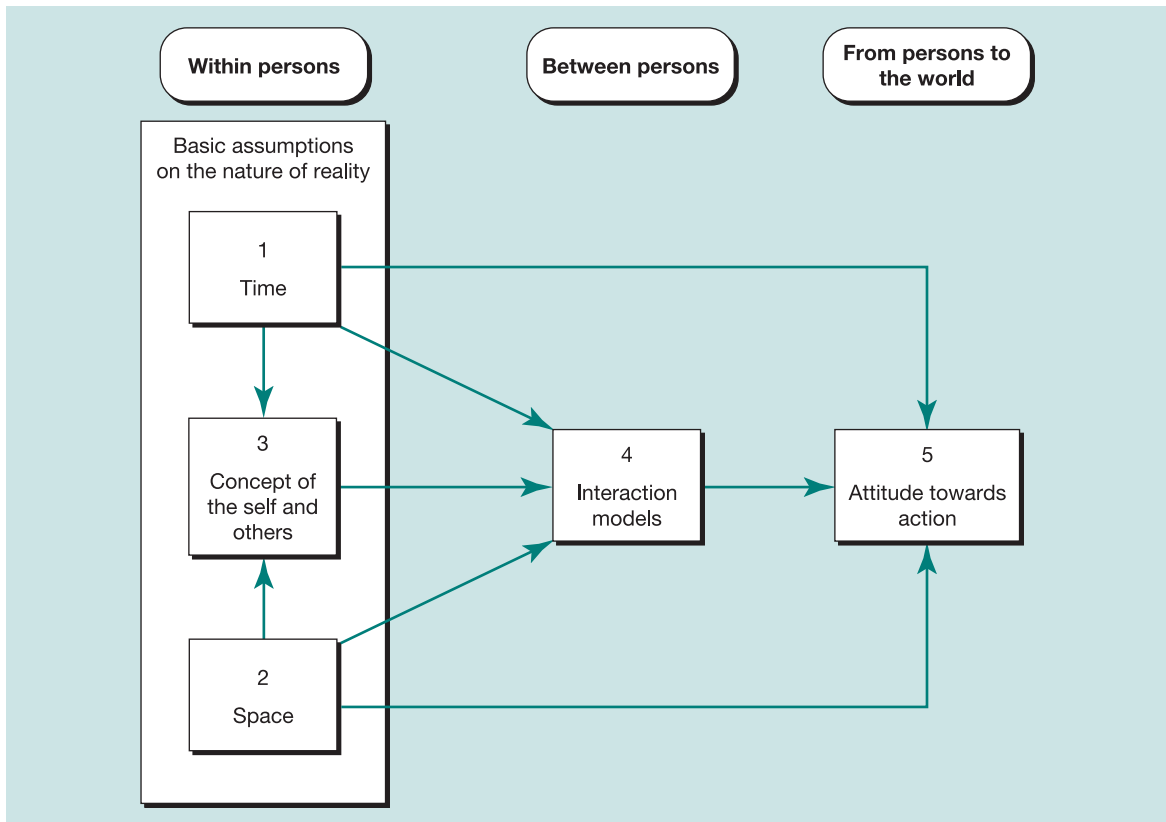
2.1 A model of action based on cultural assumptions

Figure 2.1 presents a model of action that illustrates how basic cultural assumptions in three major areas (time, space and the concept of the self and others)

influence interaction models, which shape our attitudes towards action and, in turn, our actions (further discussed in Chapter 3). These basic cultural assumptions are statements about the nature of reality, in response to a set of fundamental human problems. These assumptions give communities a framework for evaluating solutions to these fundamental problems, combining a cognitive dimension (*what people think*), an affective dimension (*what people like*) and a directive dimension (*what people do*).

As discussed in Chapter 1, while every society faces a common set of problems, different histories and emphases in these societies result in divergent dominant solutions. In this chapter, we combined Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's approach⁹ with those adopted by other authors^{2,6,10} to indicate where differences in cultural influences are likely to exist. These are presented in five tables, including different assumptions around our conceptions of time (Table 2.1),

Figure 2.1 A model of cultural dynamics



space (Table 2.2), and the concepts of self and others (Table 2.3), as well as interaction models (Table 3.1) and attitudes towards action in (Table 3.4), presented in Chapter 3.

Website link 2.1

Examine a visual representation of Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's value orientations: <http://www.toonloon.bizland.com/nutshell/values.htm#varo1>.

Each of the five tables highlights common problems, important solutions and dominant differences across cultures. This leads to a detailed inventory of basic differences in cultural assumptions that influence interactions, which will be described in detail in Chapter 3 and throughout the book, as we highlight the impact of culture on specific areas of international marketing. In subsequent chapters, cultural assumptions are used to explain elements of consumer behaviour (Chapter 5), market research (Chapter 7), marketing management (Chapters 8 to 11) and marketing communications (Chapters 12 to 14).

Figure 2.1 provides a guide to the current chapter. Our exploration starts with the cultural variability in the concept of time.

2.2

Time: cross-cultural variability

A universal perception of time seems indisputable, and so is rarely questioned. However, from a cross-cultural perspective, time may well be the area of greatest difference, because (1) assumptions are very deep-seated and (2) formally, we hold a common model of clock-based time, which is normatively perceived as being linear, continuous and economic. However, our assumptions around the concept of time and its importance have a strong influence on how we function socially. Our assumptions around time provide a common framework for activities and help to synchronize individual human behaviour and events over time. Our time orientation influences many marketing concepts, such as the product life cycle, sales forecasting and the planning of new product launches.¹⁴

Website link 2.2

Search for information about time use. Try the Centre for Time Use Research which has multinational data on how people spend their time: <http://www.timeuse.org/mtus>.

Dimensions of time orientations

Many of the commonly cited cultural theories include time-related orientations. Some focus on perceptions of the flow of time (e.g., Hall's monochronic and polychronic task orientation⁴⁻⁷ and Trompenaars' time dimension as being linear versus holistic¹²), whereas others focus on the temporal focus in society (e.g., Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's past, present and future orientations,⁹ the Chinese Cultural Connection's Confucian Work Dynamism¹⁴ (termed Long Term Orientation by Hofstede²). Table 2.1 integrates and builds on these time-related cultural assumptions and describes the contrasting or archetypical differences that correspond to four common time related problems, as subsequently discussed.

Website link 2.3

Search for information about time assumptions in different cultures, such as on this website which examines the gap between the way mainstream Indonesian culture and most Western cultures view the sense of time: <http://www.expatriat.or.id/business/senseoftime.html>.

Economicity of time

The first time-related problem in Table 2.1 relates to the extent to which time is regarded as a scarce and tangible resource. Western countries (e.g., the United States, Australia and most of Western Europe) are often representative of the 'time-is-money' culture, where time is seen as an economic good. Since time is perceived as a scarce resource, people should try to allocate it in the most economically optimal way. This results in people using their time as 'wisely' as possible in scheduling or establishing timetables and deadlines. Measurement of parking meter time by units of 7.5 minutes or sport performance by the hundredths of a second is typical of precisely measured

Table 2.1 Time-related cultural differences

Basic problem/Cultural orientations	Contrasts across cultures
1. Is time money? Economicity of time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Time is regarded as a scarce resource. ■ Time is plentiful and indefinitely available.
2. How to schedule tasks?	
(a) Monochronic	■ Only one task is undertaken at a time, following a preset schedule.
(b) Polychronic	■ Multiple tasks undertaken simultaneously and appointment times, if any, are flexible. Time is less important than the situational context.
3. Is time a continuous line?	
(a) Linearity	■ Time is seen as linear, separate blocks.
(b) Cyclicity	■ Time is cyclical, with daily, yearly and seasonal cycles.
4. How should we emphasize past, present and future?	
Temporal focus	
(a) towards the past	■ The past is important. Resources must be spent on teaching history and building museums. Oral and written traditions are important. Roots are implanted in the past and no plant can survive without its roots.
(b) towards the present	■ Live in the 'here and now'. Although not always enjoyable, the present must be accepted for what it is: the only true reality.
(c) towards the future	■ Plan for the future. Prepare for the long term; appreciate achievements (e.g., science). The future is inevitably 'bigger and better'.

economic time with direct and explicit financial consequences. Economic time norms tend to be very strict regarding time schedules, appointments, dates and durations. Appointments are likely to be scheduled with a starting and an ending time.

The economicity of time influences attitudes towards money, as well as the monetary value of time, both of which are important to marketing.^{15,16} In cultures with a strong economic time, products are created to 'save time' and services are based on blocks of time, including bank loans and life insurance policies. Buyer–seller interactions are also heavily influenced by the economicity of time, including the waiting process, communication style and efficiency of service.

Website link 2.4

Search for information about how cultures deal with economic or non-economic time perceptions. This website shows how Disney World is making queues go faster: <http://www.gizmodo.com.au/2010/12/how-disney-world-is-making-queues-go-faster/>.

Monochronic versus polychronic use of time

Take a moment to think about yourself. Would you prefer, for example, to read this paper while completing other tasks? Or, would you prefer to read the paper from beginning to end and then move on to another task? (p. 155)¹⁷

This is an example of the second time related problem in Table 2.1, which relates to task scheduling. Edward Hall described two extreme task scheduling behaviours, which he termed monochronism (M-time) and polychronism (P-time).⁶ M-time individuals prefer to do one thing at a time and tend to adhere to preset schedules. When confronted by a dilemma (e.g., a discussion with someone that lasts longer than planned), M-time people will politely stop the conversation in order to keep to their schedule. In M-time societies, not only the start of a meeting but also its finish is often planned. Conversely, P-time individuals do several things at the same time, easily modify preset schedules, and seldom experience time as 'wasted'. P-time may seem quite chaotic to M-time people: 'There is no recognized order as to who is to be served next, no queue or numbers indicating who has been waiting the longest' (Hall, p. 47).⁶

P-time people are more committed to relationships than to schedules. When confronted with a situation where a discussion with someone lasts longer than planned, they prefer to go on talking or working after preset hours rather than keep to a schedule, if they have one.

The PERT (Programme Evaluation and Review Technique) method is an example from a typical M-time ‘agenda culture’. PERT explicitly aims to reduce polychronic tasks (even when they take place simultaneously!) to provide a monochronic solution (the critical path). Management methods, originating in Western cultures, favour monochronic task organization. They clearly devalue polychronic tendencies, which tend to make plans and schedules difficult. When it comes to delays and being ‘on time’, precise monochronic systems give priority to meeting dates and commitments to schedules.^{18,19}

Cultural assumptions around M- or P-time are important for understanding buyer–seller interactions, as they tend to promote very different expectations. This is also important for scheduling in almost every aspect of business, including completion times, deliveries and promotional campaigns, where differing expectations can be calamitous.

David Palmer and David Schoorman²⁰ integrated Hall’s M- and P-time with the economicity of time to distinguish three dimensions:

1. *Time use preference (M- vs. P-time)*: The extent to which people prefer to engage in multiple tasks simultaneously.
2. *Context (low vs. high)*: The extent of context needed to effectively communicate. M-time is associated with low context communication, conveying only explicit meaning in messages. P-time is associated with high context communication, where the information that surrounds an event, as well as many indirectly meaningful cues, are needed to correctly interpret the message. High and low context messages are explained in detail in Chapter 4.
3. *Time tangibility (economicity)*: The extent to which time is viewed as a commodity that can be bought, sold, saved, spent or wasted.

Palmer and Schoorman suggest that these three dimensions interact to produce eight types of individual temporality. In a survey of 258 middle and senior executives from 25 nations – although most were Americans – they found most executives to be Type A

(44 per cent), being polyphasic, time urgent and low context; or M1 (32 per cent), being monochronic, time urgent and low context. Other patterns are likely to form with different samples from different cultures. This illustrates the importance of understanding the interaction between time use, cultural factors, and individual preferences, as the work environment and personality (extroversion) both appear to add to our understanding of cultures influence on time orientations.²¹

Linearity (L) versus cyclicity (C) of time

The third time-related problem in Table 2.1 relates to the continuity of time. A strong economic view of time, combined with monochronism, emphasizes a linear time line, where time is viewed as being a line with a point – the present – at the centre. Each portion of the line can be cut into slices, which are supposed to have a certain value.

Basic religious beliefs play a key role in supporting such a linear view of time. Christianity, and other monotheistic religions, have a one-shot interpretation of worldly existence. Only on the final judgement day will Christians know if they are to be granted eternal life. However, the Asian religions, including Hinduism and Buddhism, assume that on the death of the body, the soul is born again in another body. The belief in regular reincarnation, until a pure soul is allowed to escape the cycle and go to *nirvana*, radically changes the nature of time in a specific life. This is not ‘all the time I have got’, it is simply one of my ‘times’ across several lives. For most Asians, cyclicity is central in their pattern of time. *Nirvana* is the final release from the cycle of reincarnation. It is attained by extinction of all desires and individual existence, culminating in absolute blessedness (in Buddhism), or in absorption into Brahman (in Hinduism). Naturally, patience is on the side of the people believing in cyclical reincarnation of the soul. For Christians, it is more urgent to achieve, because their souls are given only one worldly life. But, as the New Testament puts it clearly, those who do right, even in the very last moment, will be considered favourably.

Another element that favours a cyclical view of time is the degree of emphasis put on the natural rhythms of years and seasons, the sun and the moon. This concept contrasts so-called ‘modern’ with ‘traditional’ societies, in so far as ‘modern’ means technology, mastering nature and, to a certain extent, the loss of

nature-related reference points. Despite this, highly developed societies such as the Japanese are known for having maintained a strong orientation to nature. The floral art of *ikebana* and the emphasis on maintaining a contact with nature, even in highly urban environments, are testimonies to their attachment to the natural rhythms of nature. Even within a country, the relationship to nature influences the model of time adopted by urban as compared with rural people.

Elements of cyclicity of time have three main origins: (1) religious assumptions about reincarnation of the soul; (2) natural rhythms of years, seasons and days; and (3) the social division of time periods, which is more arbitrary, less natural and ‘given’, than we assume. Time is naturally both linear and cyclical.

Temporal orientations: past, present, future

The fourth time-related problem in Table 2.1 relates to the temporal focus of human life. As stated by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck⁹ (pp. 13–15):

The possible cultural interpretations of temporal focus of human life break easily into the three point range of past, present and future . . . Spanish-Americans, who have been described as taking the view that man is a victim of natural forces, are also a people who place the present time alternative in first position . . . Many modern European countries . . . have strong leanings to a past orientation . . . Americans, more strongly than most people of the world, place an emphasis upon the future – a future which is anticipated to be ‘bigger and better’.

Societies differ in whether the extent to which the focus is on the past, present or future, as typified by the following:⁹

- Past-oriented people emphasize the past in explaining where we are now. They tend to value the preservation and maintenance of tradition, including restoration of old buildings, investment in museums and the value of teaching history at school. Many European and some Asian cultures tend to be past oriented.
- Present-oriented people focus on the ‘here and now’, believing that the past is over and the future is uncertain, theoretical and difficult to imagine. They accommodate changes in beliefs and traditions; however, religion may play an important role in pushing people towards a present orientation, especially if it emphasizes that only God decides the future. Arabic–Muslim culture has been

described as fatalistic and short-term oriented.²² As stated by Harris and Moran (p. 474):

Who controls time? A Western belief is that one controls his own time. Arabs believe that their time is controlled, to a certain extent, by an outside force – namely Allah – therefore the Arabs become very fatalistic in their view of time . . . Most Arabs are not clockwatchers, nor are they planners of time.²³

- Future-oriented people focus on planning for a bigger and better tomorrow. They tend to find ways to replace the old and delay immediate gratification to invest in the future. An example of this is the millions of Americans who start a savings account for their child’s education when s/he is born. Future-oriented societies will tend to invest in science or technology. Americans and some Asian cultures are considered future oriented.

While these orientations tend to differentiate cultures, they are also related to individual characteristics and traits.²⁴ For instance, older people tend to be more past oriented, whereas younger people tend to be more present or future oriented. Furthermore, societies undergoing change may underplay their basic temporal orientation during this period.

Website link 2.5

Search for information about how languages reflect and shape our conception of time, such as this weblink about how time flies in the Andes: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2005/feb/24/4>.

Important differences in temporal orientations were also found in the Chinese Value Survey (CVS), which purposefully introduced an Eastern bias to counter the historical Western bias in value surveys.¹⁴ The CVS proposed a Confucian Work Dynamism, which corresponds to a future orientation on one hand and a past and present orientation on the other. Later, Hofstede (p. 359)² referred to this as Long Term Orientation (LTO) versus Short Term Orientation (STO):

Long Term Orientation stands for the fostering of virtues oriented towards future rewards, in particular, perseverance and thrift. Its opposite pole, Short Term Orientation, stands for the fostering of virtues related to the past and present, in particular, respect for tradition, preservation of ‘face’ and fulfilling social obligations.