AMERICAN CULTURAL PATTERNS

A Cross-Cultural Perspective

EDWARD C. STEWART

AND

MILTON J. BENNETT

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INTRODUCTION

The need to improve cultural understanding led to the writing of the first edition of this volume some twenty years ago. Since then, research in cross-cultural psychology and intercultural communication has advanced our knowledge and skills in the field which has enabled more people to become more effective in intercultural relationships. Their numbers, however, remain relatively few, even as the need for understanding other cultures and for developing intercultural competence grows, fueled by the realities of living in an interdependent world.

Intercultural communicators are discovering how deeply critical events facing the world today are rooted in culture. Each morning the newspaper reminds its readers of the American trade deficit with Japan. American and European economists alike speak of the Japanese culture that blocks access to its market. The evening news reports the latest move in world power politics that threatens the peace, but the essential agreement on the deterrences needed to maintain international stability reposes uneasily on conflicting cultural patterns of negotiation and decision making. The cauldron of violence in the Middle East continues to reflect cultural conflict between social and political groups, as does the rioting that erupts periodically in urban centers around the world. Advances in intercultural communication have at times stripped away layers of misunderstanding only to confront the cultural roots of economic, political, and sociological events. Many of the national and international tensions, including threats to peace, cannot be addressed at present levels of knowledge and skill.

Another reason for cultivating cultural understanding stems from the changed position of the United States in the world. The decline of American political and economic influence has affected the role of individual Americans abroad and changed foreigners' attitudes toward them. Americans no longer occupy the privileged position they enjoyed only twenty years ago. This altered role has made nearly obsolete the word *advisor*, used in the first edition to refer to Americans working abroad. The new role Americans play as partners, hosts, visitors, and competitors demands the reformulation of a number of central issues in the realm of cross-cultural understanding.

In this book, cross-cultural problems are seen as arising from differences in behavior, thinking, assumptions, and values between Americans and people from other countries and cultures with whom they associate. These cultural differences often produce misunderstandings and lead to ineffectiveness in face-to-face communication. A deeper understanding of the nature of cultural differences would increase the effectiveness of Americans in cross-cultural situations. But to reach this goal, Americans must first become more conscious and knowledgeable about how their own culture has conditioned their ways of thinking and planted within them the values and assumptions that govern their behavior.

Cultural self-awareness is not always easy since culture is internalized as patterns of thinking and behaving that are believed to be "natural"—simply the way things are. Awareness of their subjective culture is particularly difficult for Americans since they often interpret cultural factors as characteristics of individual personality. This view of internalized cultural patterns, disregarding their social origins, is a characteristic of American culture. It is not a universal point of view.

Since this book is written from the perspective of Americans, their culture serves as the frame of reference while other cultures enter the discussion as contrasts. Like world maps that place the map's originating country in the center, there is a degree of ethnocentrism in this focus on American culture, but it also serves an important purpose for cross-cultural analysis. We would like to stress, therefore, that this convention does not imply that American culture is perceived to be at the center of the mosaic of world cultures.

While our analysis of cross-cultural problems in communication naturally identifies obstacles to intercultural communication between Americans and members of other cultures and suggests ways in which communication could be improved, it is not our objective to prescribe behavior. Instead, we shall offer schematic descriptions of some important aspects of American culture and show their practical consequences for intercultural communication. Geared to operational needs of practitioners, the treatment deliberately skirts numerous issues concerning the meaning of culture, values, and other matters of primarily theoretical interest.

The objective of this second edition, as of the first, is to supply a perspective on some of the cross-cultural problems encountered by Americans visiting, working, or living with foreign associates. Whether the association occurs within the United States or abroad, this book presumes that those from other cultures direct their lives from different points of view and that Americans will gain a deeper understanding of their own culture by looking at it from contrasting cultural perspectives. We expect applications of this understanding will be made by practitioners working as trainers, technicians, students, academicians, businesspeople, or others who are visiting extensively or living in other cultural environments. It should also appeal to those concerned with American studies, who may wish to use cross-cultural analysis as a means of bringing American culture into sharper focus.

Finally, we hope this book will be valuable to people of other cultures who wish to gain a deeper understanding of American behavior. We have sought to avoid the ethnocentric distortions which limit the usefulness of most cultural self-studies to foreign readers.

In the first chapter, the cross-cultural problem is represented in a basic contrast between Western and non-Western societies with examples of specific cultural barriers met by Americans abroad. In chapter 2, American patterns of thinking and cultural contrasts are traced from their concrete inception in perception to their abstract conclusion in conceptualization. Chapter 3 explores the implications and limitations of the Whorf hypothesis and other factors in language use, including the role of nonverbal behavior in American and contrasting communication patterns. Chapters 4 through 7 present the core American assumptions and values organized into four areas: form of activity, form of social relations, perception of the world, and perception of self and the individual. Assumptions and values discussed in these chapters are the dominant values commonly associated with the American middle class. Clearly, these do not include all the significant values shared by large numbers of Americans. The relativity of assumptions and values is stressed throughout this description by contrasting dominant American cultural characteristics with those of other domestic and foreign cultures. The final chapter examines the implications of the analyses appearing in the previous chapters for the actual practice of intercultural communication by Americans.

Throughout the book we have tried as much as possible to employ only common concepts and to avoid using the language and concepts of social science that lack familiar connotations. We have, however,

adopted certain conventions of expression from the field of intercultural communication. Since the words *cross-cultural* and *intercultural* have similar definitions, we sometimes use them interchangeably, but we also apply them with more precise and separate meanings. *Cross-cultural* normally refers to any *comparison* of cultural differences (e.g., a cross-cultural study of values in the U.S. and Japan) or to situations in which such differences exist (e.g., a cross-cultural teaching situation). The word *intercultural* is usually added to *communication* or *relations* and refers to the actual *interaction* between people of different cultures. For example, in a cross-cultural work environment, Americans and foreigners necessarily engage in intercultural communication. We avoid using *international* since the word refers to a wide range of political and economic affairs that may be neither culturally comparative nor interactive. Despite avoidance of the word, we hope that the book's cross-cultural perspective will be recognized as a necessary complement to international studies.

The term *American* is used here as a short form of "citizen of the United States of America." While many people prefer *North American,* the authors believe that to include sovereign Canadians in the same grouping as Americans is misleading, despite many similarities between the populations of the two countries. It is even more misleading when you consider the fact that Mexico is also part of North America. The use of the word *American* to refer to the people of the United States has a long historical precedent, and we have chosen to accept it for our purposes here.

American culture refers to the dominant patterns of thinking and behaving of mainstream Americans, composed primarily, but not exclusively, of members of the white, male middle class. When discussing other cultures represented in American society, we will use the term *ethnic subcultures.* This distinction is artificial since American mainstream and ethnic subcultures constantly intermingle, reciprocally influencing each other. When discussing the interaction of ethnic minorities, we shall substitute *multicultural* for *cross-cultural* and *interethnic* for *intercultural.*

Additional terms we shall use in specific ways include the following: *sojourner* is anyone (in this case, an American) who travels abroad for a specific purpose or resides temporarily in a foreign country. The term *abroad* is used generically to mean "outside the U.S.A." Foreigners with whom Americans interact are called *associates* or *coworkers* unless a more specific label like *host* or *student* is appropriate. Since the meaning of *foreigners* can sometimes be ambiguous, *host country nationals* will occasionally be used to refer to people whom Americans encounter abroad.

The original edition of this book incorporated the work of Florence R. Kluckhohn *without adopting her complete system of theoretical concepts.* This edition still strongly reflects the influence of Dr. Kluckhohn's work. While care has been taken to represent Dr. Kluckhohn's ideas accurately, the authors assume responsibility for any differences in interpretation which may appear. The work of George M. Foster and Robin M. Williams, Jr. is also integrated into this analysis of American culture.

In addition to the published material referenced throughout the text, some unpublished sources have been used. These include interviews with military advisors in Laos, Thailand, and Latin America, United States Agency for International Development technicians, Peace Corps volunteers, medical missionaries, and hundreds of foreign and American students in international study programs. These sources have been augmented by the writers' own observations. The senior author, Edward Stewart, has for years served as a consultant to and conducted research for businesses in the United States, Japan, and Europe and has worked with government agencies in the U.S. and abroad that regulate technology. The other author, Milton Bennett, is an intercultural trainer, educator, and researcher whose work includes the preparation and debriefing of Americans working, traveling, and studying worldwide.

Florence Kluckhohn, George Foster, and Robin Williams, Jr. provided substantive critiques of an original draft of the first edition, setting the form persisting through this revision. The writers are indebted to them for their incisive, kind, and patient reviews. We remain grateful to David Hoopes, who has provided constant encouragement in his insightful editing of both editions of this book.

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE CROSS-CULTURAL PROBLEM

Lasting success in working or living with people from another culture ultimately rests on good human relations. Sometimes the relationship is specialized, as with an engineer doing business .with other engineers. Their technical background and purposes may create a professional bond that allows them to establish successful temporary and restricted business relationships during a brief visit. Other guests in a foreign environment may depend on the tolerance of their hosts, simply "being themselves" and making no effort to accommodate to cultural differences. The short-term success of these kinds of professional or host-guest relationships sometimes leads people to discount the importance of cultural differences in cross-cultural interaction. But this sort of "success" cannot be sustained over time. Even technicians must eventually discard the role of expert and develop empathy for coworkers in the cross-cultural setting.

Until recently, little attention has been given to the effect of cultural differences or sociocultural factors on interpersonal relations. Even today the view that these factors constitute the critical ingredient of cross-cultural interaction is not widely held among people involved in international affairs. And outside the field of intercultural communication, the subject is still largely neglected by scholars. The most ambitious attempt to correct this deficiency is Richard Brislin's Cross-cultural Encounters (1981). In this book Brislin summarizes the existing research on cross-cultural interpersonal relations and demonstrates the complexity of the subject, helping to

explain why practitioners have avoided it and why researchers have sought simple solutions based on a unified view of culture.

In practice, confusion is created by two basic aspects of culture. One aspect is *subjective culture*—the psychological features of culture, including assumptions, values, and patterns of thinking. The other is *objective culture*—the institutions and artifacts of a culture, such as its economic system, social customs, political structures and processes, arts, crafts, and literature. Objective culture can be treated as an externalization of subjective culture which usually becomes reified; that is, those institutions which are properly seen as extensions of human activity attain an independent status as external entities. They seem to exist "out there," and their ongoing human origins are forgotten.

In traditional universities the study of objective culture is well established in departments of social sciences and humanities. Perhaps this is because institutions and other external artifacts of behavior are more accessible to examination. Subjective culture is usually treated as an unconscious process influencing perception, thinking, and memory or as personal knowledge which is inaccessible to trainers or educators. In universities this aspect of culture is a newcomer and a minor thread in sociology, social psychology, and communication. Subjective culture becomes a major subject only in cultural anthropology. Although anthropologists typically make cross-cultural comparisons, they much more rarely investigate the practical aspects of intercultural communication. Instead, their major interest is in collecting information about the institutions of objective culture. While this kind of information provides useful background, it does not effectively prepare sojourners for the intercultural experience. Yet, it is precisely this information about objective culture which constitutes most of the cultural components of the majority of orientation programs for persons going abroad. The problem, as we see it, is to conceptualize subjective culture in such a way that it can be more effectively incorporated into preparing sojourners for living and working abroad. To that end, we will analyze the basic elements of culture as interpersonal dimensions relevant to cross-cultural cooperation.

Aspects of Cross-Cultural Interactions

For most people, including Americans, the distinguishing mark of cross-cultural interaction is the disappearance of the familiar guideposts that allow them to act without thinking in their own culture. Routine matters become problems that require planning or conscious decisions. They may not know when to shake hands, nod their heads, ask a question, express an opinion, or maintain silence. They may have to question the

effectiveness of their techniques for giving advice and may need to search for proper channels of communication.

Faced with these cross-cultural uncertainties, people tend to impose their own perspectives in an effort to dispel the ambiguity created by the unusual behavior of host country nationals. They are unlikely to suspend judgment about differences in behavior because they assume unconsciously that their own ways are normal, natural, and right. Those of the other culture, therefore, must be abnormal, unnatural, and wrong. This presumption of superiority of one's own culture is, of course, characteristic not only of Americans but of most peoples of the world.

Cross-cultural ambiguity and reactions to it often become most prominent for the American in the world of work. In the foreign setting

> he sees what looks like familiar bureaucratic structures and technological systems, but the way they actually function is confusing. He meets people with professional training similar to his own but who do not always act in their work role as expected— yet he depends on them for getting the job done. Frustration becomes part of his everyday language if he finds no way to achieve fuller understandings of why things which look alike do not perform as they are supposed to (Useem, Useem, and Donoghue 1963, 179).

This problem may become especially acute when individuals work with foreigners in the context of a familiar organization since the environment provides them with little if any incentive to recognize the cultural biases of their behavior or to question the objectivity of their actions. An understanding of the biases and underlying predispositions of their particular culture should aid Americans in ridding themselves of the belief that their own assumptions and values should be the norm for all peoples. This change in attitude does not mean that Americans should discard their own culture (even if it were possible for them to do so) or even that they should value it less highly, but it should prepare them to perceive both their own behavior and that of coworkers more objectively.

Americans frequently go abroad in the role of consultant and may, therefore, be less directly involved in actual work than when they were at home. Thus, their goals abroad are usually less tangible than those they have at home. If work and social position are not clearly structured, individuals are thrown back upon their own resources in making decisions, evaluating situations, and pursuing courses of action. Performance on the job may be adversely affected when routine matters become major problems and cultural differences are intensified. Consultants may also be deprived of the social support available when working within a familiar

organization, and they may be either isolated or else absorbed into a foreign social structure. Customary services and the advice or moral support provided by colleagues will also normally be missing.

Many Americans find when they arrive abroad that their work assumes a character quite different from what they were led to expect. A training problem takes on a new dimension when the sojourner discovers that the trainees, in addition to speaking only their native language, are illiterate. Sometimes a health program does not get off the ground because people do not have the concept of germs and are therefore unable to understand preventive health measures. Most upsetting of all, their culture provides an explanation of disease and health incompatible with Western scientific discoveries. In short, what is aptly labeled "training," "education," or "health" in the United States may acquire entirely different characteristics abroad.

A particularly disturbing problem faced by consultants may be the intransigence of local officials and government which makes the Americans' job one of persuading and influencing. They may be compelled to accept, perhaps bitterly, the frustration of their objectives, and when deprived of concrete achievements, Americans may experience feelings of failure. These feelings are often compounded by the realization that their services are not wanted. (This has been particularly true of the military advisors and, to a lesser degree, of Peace Corps volunteers.) They are accepted as a necessary evil or, at best, a neutral presence. They bring with them material resources and prestige, but their advice is not always welcomed.

American students, educators, and researchers face problems in some ways similar to those encountered by consultants, business executives, and other professionals living abroad. Ambitious educational goals that were set in the home environment may be out of reach in a foreign country. Researchers may find data that "should" be readily available concealed by layers of bureaucracy, and they may discover that their methods of inquiry, such as interviews or questionnaires, are inappropriate or ineffective. Students who expected that their host families would simply be providing sleeping quarters may be surprised at the intensity of cross-cultural adjustment that is demanded of them. Teachers are likely to encounter radically different attitudes toward learning and classroom behavior. The disappearance of familiar guideposts acts on academics as it does on others, provoking frustration and perhaps the assumption that American approaches to education are superior in all ways. In addition students and others engaged in educational exchange may feel that the unexpected problems have spoiled the pleasures anticipated in going abroad.

Teachers and visiting scholars abroad are in a position similar to that of other workers in seemingly familiar organizations. They may resist the

recognition of cultural differences in favor of maintaining a semblance of their familiar roles—roles that encourage equality and an emphasis on the give-and-take that prevails in the American classroom. Yet, teachers will probably find, especially outside of Europe, that their students behave quite formally, are very deferential to the teacher and reluctant to participate in classroom discussion, and are inclined to rote learning. American educators may judge this behavior as indicative of a personal failing on their own or their students' part, rather than seeing it as a culturally different pattern.

Many, if not most, of the problems faced by Americans abroad are encountered in reverse by foreign students and scholars coming to the United States. American instructors are likely to demand "appropriate" behavior from these students and to judge aberrations as a failure to adapt. Ironically, in an attempt to adapt to American classroom patterns, foreign students sometimes overreact to the participatory atmosphere, monopolizing too much time and speaking dogmatically. This may appear as arrogant and domineering to the instructor, fueling further negative evaluation. Foreign students in the U.S., like American students abroad, certainly must learn to communicate effectively with the host country nationals and to cope with the local educational system. However, Americans with a knowledge of their own culture and an appreciation for cultural diversity can help foreign students immensely by openly recognizing their differing cultures and by explaining American patterns in culturally comparative terms.

Americans abroad readily observe and describe cross-cultural differences of language, customs and preferences. The fact that these kinds of differences may be easily perceived often obscures the deeply imbedded but more profound disparities in concepts of the world and human experience and in patterns of thought and modes of action, all of which affect the person-to-person interaction of Americans and their hosts. Subtle differences in the behavior, thoughts, and emotions of associates may not always be perceived by Americans, but as they cumulate they require interpretation, and the explanation most likely to occur to Americans is that their associates have a bias against them. In other words, the Americans may feel they are being stereotyped.

Contributing to this reaction and sometimes giving it substance is the fact that others do indeed have stereotypes of Americans, perhaps originating from Americans known previously or from hearsay, but more probably emerging from exposure to American films and television. Aspects of the stereotype may run counter to the American's emotional and cultural frames of reference. For instance, the stereotype of "rich American" may be perceived by an individual American as neither an accurate nor desirable label. Americans may be regarded as representa-

tives of the U.S. government, whether they are on government business or not. The heightened meaning of nationalism abroad may lead hosts to assume that these Americans will speak the official line or pursue particular policies, regardless of their personal convictions. Sometimes this stereotype takes the form of "American CIA agent."

Americans, like foreigners, develop stereotypes of others. Media attention to the traditional aspects of other cultures may lead sojourners to expect their coworkers to be evasive, superstitious, ritualistic, or unsophisticated. Foreigners in the United States are constantly surprised by Americans asking them if they ride camels or if they have ever eaten ice cream. Ironically, Americans couple these misconceptions with a tendency to generalize to all foreigners certain American characteristics of human relations which they consider universal. When added to the stereotypes foreigners have of Americans, this tendency compounds communication problems and masks the deep cultural patterns that need scrutiny.

The core difficulty in cross-cultural interaction is—simply stated—a failure to recognize relevant cultural differences. Because of superficial stereotyping and the belief that one's own values and behaviors are natural and universal, Americans (and others) at home or abroad often fail to grasp the social dynamic that separates them from their associates. Unless sojourners recognize the unconscious assumptions that they make about human relations, they may never be able to establish effective intercultural relations. This failure to create a viable intercultural social context may compel sojourners to retreat into an enclave of compatriots, to "go native," or to return home. Any of these alternatives may preclude their accomplishing the objectives which took them abroad.

The Basis for Cultural Contrast

The objective of establishing an awareness of cultural contrasts leads us to begin with an observation reported by Americans who have worked and lived in many parts of the world. They often say that non-Western countries, mostly in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, differ from one another in some respects, but all share common characteristics often referred to as non-Western. Although the frequency of this observation does not necessarily verify it, westernization is often associated with other perceptions of differences that provide useful concepts for cultural analysis. For instance, non-Western countries frequently share a status as former colonies, or as territories within the spheres of influence of European countries. This historical burden, even today, endows them

with a common fate. Formerly, these non-Western countries, with a few major exceptions, supplied cheap labor, raw materials, and markets to the industrial countries. Now, they make up the group of developing nations striving to break into the ranks of the industrialized states, with Japan having been the first to succeed.

Including the historical dimension of colonialism in a cultural analysis increases the scope of understanding, but social scientists are more at home with political, economic, and military events than with subjective culture. Therefore, most do not give systematic treatment to the ways of thinking of a people. Tönnies (1957), a German sociologist, is an exception. He analyzed the social changes that take place as nations develop from traditional, *gemeinschaft* societies into modern, *gesellschaft* states.

The social order of the gemeinschaft society is largely based on the customs and traditions of communities sharing the same language, race, religion, and ethnicity, and wielding economic power over their geographical region. Social belonging tends to be total, and community members seek satisfaction of all goals within their communities. Social sanctions and political control are based on informal and traditional ascriptions to elitist groups. Workers are defenders and supporters of the social order and are conscripted to their tasks. Opinions and beliefs are private in the sense that they are associated with the customs of the community rather than determined in open, pubic discussions. Identity of the individual is bound up with belonging to the community. The social fiber of gemeinschaft communities creates for its members an *interpersonal reality*, a concept which Diaz-Guerrero (1976) uses to distinguish Mexican culture from American culture which he refers to as having an *objective reality*. These concepts are applied more generally to gemeinschaft and gesellschaft societies.

As a country develops into a modern nation, the social intensity of gemeinschaft communities, their social ties based on emotion and sentiment, loosen to become a web of impersonal social relations supported by the formal and even contractual ties characteristic of gesellschaft societies such as the United States. Social ties are based on rational agreement and self-interest and are regulated by law. Groups are formed for specific purposes and accept members based on special interest or on technical, educational, or professional attainments. Identity is separate from belonging; the status of the individual citizen and member of the state takes precedence over membership in groups. The status enjoyed by the individual is a product of achievement rather than a birthright as political and professional ties replace traditional social links. The changes induced in objective culture at the level of political, social, and economic institutions trickle down to the subjective culture

of interpersonal interaction. Thought is rational and standards are utilitarian, creating an objective reality for members of gesellschaft societies (Mouer and Sugimoto 1986, 61).

The Tönnies dichotomy parallels in a historical frame the contrasts of Western versus non-Western and colonizer versus colonized, and it provides insights into subjective culture in gemeinschaft and gesellschaft societies. Though general and ideal, the analysis of interpersonal and objective reality of gemeinschaft and gesellschaft societies helps to explain the development of Western and American cultures.

The true relationship between gemeinschaft and gesellschaft is revealed by a historical glance at the role of technology in society, particularly the technologies for industry and war. Two technical innovations in particular were critical—gunpowder for firearms and coke-fired production of steel and iron for industry and war. Neither innovation was Western. Both technologies had appeared in China by A.D. 1000 (McNeill 1982, 24-39). Iron and steel production evolved in China under the aegis of a dramatic social innovation—market-regulated behavior, which replaced obedience to command. But in the centuries between A.D. 1000 and 1600, the gemeinschaft interpersonal reality of Chinese mandarins successfully held in balance the gesellschaft drive of successful entrepreneurs. Market-regulated behavior never entirely replaced obedience to command or gained full sway over production. In medieval China

> private riches acquired by personal shrewdness in buying and selling violated the Confucian sense of propriety. Such persons could be tolerated, even encouraged, when their activity served official ends. But to allow merchants or manufacturers to acquire too much power, or accumulate too much capital, was as unwise as to allow a military commander or a barbarian chieftain to control too many armed men (McNeill, 36).

Government policy was critical in controlling market-regulated behavior. Officials took over private production by creating state monopolies and levied taxes or imposed official prices to reduce levels of operation. The Chinese control of market-regulated behavior appears to qualify as a gemeinschaft curb on gesellschaft dynamism. China displayed political and social union, opposed the self-serving individualism of entrepreneurs, and placed the bureaucrat at the summit of prestige. In the eyes of Chinese imperial officialdom, the empire formed a single household (McNeill, 31). On occasion the official response to market-regulated behavior was to abort technology. For example, in 1436 the imperial court issued a decree forbidding the construction of new ocean-going vessels. The Chinese ships that vanished from the oceans were technically superior and several times the size of the Western vessels that arrived in the Indian Ocean some

decades later (McNeill, 40-50). By the end of the fifteenth century, China had lost its technical edge to the West, which retained a clear advantage until the Japanese breakthrough of the last twenty years.

The Chinese cybernetic society of the fifteenth century found no equivalent in the West. Although Christian values were as hostile to the spirit of the marketplace as Confucianism, efforts of popes to establish hegemony over Christendom ended in failure. Earlier efforts made by monarchs had come to the same dismal end (McNeill, 68-69). Europe remained divided into locally divergent political structures, perpetually at odds with one another. By the thirteenth century, military and market expansions in Europe were rapidly depleting primary social bonds, replacing them with gesellschaft market behavior. The primary relations of the gemeinschaft bond within communities effectively ceased to regulate everyday conduct.

> This political situation permitted a remarkable merger of market and military behavior to take root and flourish in the most active economic centers of western Europe. Commercialization of organized violence came vigorously to the fore in the fourteenth century when mercenary armies became standard in Italy. Thereafter, market forces and attitudes began to affect military action as seldom before. The art of war began to evolve among Europeans with a rapidity that soon raised it to unexampled heights (McNeill, 69-70).

The shift from gemeinschaft social organization of interpersonal reality to gesellschaft forms of objective reality appeared as one of the conditions for the shotgun wedding of war and commerce. Gunpowder was the active agent. The earliest evidence for the existence of guns in Europe is 1326. Thereafter, the technology of guns and firearms developed rapidly, unrestrained by political or social controls. In Italy by the fifteenth century, a connection was made between science and warfare. Italians, trembling with fear, mobilized their best brains to help resist the superior cannons of the French armies invading Italian city-states. The sculptor, Michelangelo, and the scientists, Leonardo da Vinci and later Galileo, among others, were pressed into service, forging the link between science and military technology that has persisted to the present. The manufacture of improved firearms revolutionized warfare, leveled city walls, and wrought major changes in Western societies. Unlike the Chinese, Europeans appeared fascinated by the union of war, science, and commerce.

One of the ironies of the gemeinschaft dynamic is found in the history of Japan. In 1504 the Portuguese disembarked on Japanese shores carrying firearms. The Japanese quickly adopted them and improved them; within a generation their quality excelled that of the Portuguese weapons.

Armed with these refined Japanese firearms, lowly peasants killed lordly samurai with impunity, inflicting severe damage upon the gemeinschaft structure of the society. In 1642 Japan closed its shores to foreigners, banned firearms, destroyed existing ones, and obliterated all mention of them in records and manuscripts. For a period of two hundred years, Japan successfully reversed the development of military technology, destroying all traces of its prior existence to preserve the integrity of its social relations. In its isolation, Japan avoided Western colonization. When its shores were opened once more to the outside world in 1868, the Japanese embraced foreign technology, quickly modernized the nation, and by the 1980s, assumed the position of the second major economic power in the free world. This achievement, built on a gemeinschaft society, demonstrates that modernization does not require the acquisition of a gesellschaft dynamic, as occurred in the West.

Events of the 1970s have cast new light on the relation between gemeinschaft and gesellschaft. The economic and technical supremacy of the West (and particularly of the United States), usually associated only with gesellschaft, has been challenged by Japan. Japan is an industrial and modern state based on gemeinschaft organization in which social, political, and economic institutions blend one into the other, virtually inseparable. In the essentially one-party political system of Japan, political issues are settled within the same party by means of the gemeinschaft social dynamic of interpersonal reality. Both at the level of gemeinschaft institutions and of social interactions, Japan reveals a cultural base for its technology and industry which is different from the one supporting American and European development. The Japanese case of unexpected success in modernization, when compared with lessons from the West, convincingly demonstrates that the relationship between gemeinschaft and gesellschaft is more complex than suggested by a simple historical evolution from an agrarian to a modernized society.

The original formulation of Tönnies, describing societies in the broad strokes of gemeinschaft and gesellschaft , is too simple. The primordial attachments of gemeinschaft based on blood, region, race, custom, and even language and religion persist in gemeinschaft societies. The social dynamic of personalism is exploited in social movements and revolutions. In times of danger, patriotism may strengthen, but as the studies of the military in World War II demonstrate, civil bonds (the appeal of ideology and patriotism) do not drive the fighting spirit in combat as much as loyalty to fellow soldiers (Shils 1957, 138).

An example of this dynamic within American society is the heightened awareness of ethnicity since the 1950s. Ethnic group identity and a sense of gemeinschaft belonging became a partial replacement for what was perceived as second-class citizenship in the larger society. The new

sense of group identity provided political clout for these previously impotent minorities. The development of communes, human relations institutes, encounter groups, evangelical religion, black power, radical student movements, and other social phenomena similarly indicate gemeinschaft tendencies in American society.

The simple dichotomy of gemeinschaft and gesellschaft is further complicated by variation from society to society. For example, the people of Thailand are members of a gemeinschaft society, rural and traditional. But Thais think of themselves primarily as autonomous individuals rather than as part of a family or extended group. Their self-concept resembles that of a middle-class member of a gesellschaft society. On the other hand, the Japanese, who, like Americans, live in a highly industrialized nation, define themselves predominantly in relationship to others. The implications of these various definitions of the self are twofold: a given aspect of a non-Western culture may sometimes be more similar to a corresponding feature of Western culture than to that of other non-Western cultures; and secondly, industrialization does not necessarily assume the emphasis on the individual found in the United States.

Treating Tönnies' gemeinschaft/gesellschaft dichotomy as separate categories clearly does not work. While providing some basic contrasts, it does not accommodate variations among and within cultures. If, however, we discard the notion of categorization and treat gemeinschaft and gesellschaft as opposite ends of a spectrum instead of exclusive categories, the two social dynamics succeed in providing an important entry into cultural analysis. It is a bias of American thought to perceive similarities in others and to downgrade differences and variations, particularly when describing non-Western societies. Americans do not typically appreciate that each society incorporates a full range of cultural variations, and differences between two societies are found when patterns of the same cultural components are compared.

In this book, many dimensions have been employed in addition to the set established by gemeinschaft and gesellschaft. The approach we have used to select cultural components as well as to stress cultural variation, has much in common with the value orientations used by Florence Kluckhohn. Her model of cultural variations is based on the proposition that all human beings, irrespective of background or conditions of life, face a limited number of common human problems. One such problem is how to relate to one's cultural compatriots, the critical question singled out by Tönnies. Kluckhohn identifies four additional problems: relationship to time, relationship to nature, form of activity, and the nature of man (F. Kluckhohn 1963, 221-22). The full range of possible solutions to these universal human problems is found in each society although a dominant solution is usually present. Different dominant solutions represent generalizable

cultural positions, and deviance from them in any given culture represents intracultural variation.

The dimensions of analysis used in this book exceed by far the five of Kluckhohn, but the basic idea is the same. Both American and foreign societies will be described primarily according to their dominant cultural positions within the full spectrum of solutions available to members of a given society. Differences in dominant positions will be used to provide contrasting examples to American culture.

A worldwide review of dominant cultural patterns shows that American culture usually lies at one end of the spectrum for each problem while the cultures of non-Western societies tend to occupy positions at or near the opposite end. For example, Iranians, Ecuadorians, and Taiwanese Chinese differ in the qualities they value in a person. But in comparison with middle-class Americans, the members of each of these societies place more stress on gemeinschaft features of family and position in society. In the United States, individual achievement is usually valued above family. In this and most other cultural assumptions and values, the American middle class differs from the majority of non-Western culture groups. It is legitimate, therefore, to compare peoples of non-Western countries as a group with Americans even though the non-Western countries themselves differ markedly.

Assumptions and Values

People typically have a strong sense of what the world is really like, so it is with surprise that they discover that "reality" is built up out of certain assumptions commonly shared among members of the same culture. *Cultural assumptions* may be defined as abstract, organized, general concepts which pervade a person's outlook and behavior. They are existential in that they define what is "real" and the nature of that reality for members of a culture. Assumptions are not themselves behavior, which is concrete, discrete, and specific. Additionally, cultural assumptions exist by definition outside of awareness. That is, we cannot readily imagine alternatives to them. In this sense, assumptions are like primitive or zero-order beliefs, defined by Daryl Bem as

> so taken for granted that we are apt not to notice that we hold them at all; we remain unaware of them until they are called to our attention or are brought into question by some bizarre circumstance in which they appear to be violated (1970, 5).

Members of different cultures possess various ideas of reality since their assumptions about both the world and experience differ. Most

Americans, for instance, implicitly assume an objective reality in which the world external to themselves is physical and material and does not have a soul or spirit. The truth of these assumptions may appear to be self-evident, but, as we have seen, they are not shared by people in many parts of the non-Western world. Large groups of people throughout South- and Southeast Asia endow nature with an essence similar to the one reserved by Westerners for humans alone. Westerners, and Americans in particular, are predisposed by their assumptions to exploit the physical environment to their own purposes. Conversely, Indians or Southeast Asians find themselves attempting to synthesize or integrate with nature because they assume that this is the natural relationship. In this animistic view, human beings are just another form of life and do not possess unique attributes which set them apart from other forms of life or from topographical features of the environment such as mountains or valleys.

Basic assumptions such as the perception of the self and the perception of the world can be inferred from actions of an individual; however, several assumptions are usually required to fully explain any particular behavior. Furthermore, these basic perceptions do not inevitably fix the direction in which an individual acts. For example, middle-class Americans usually think of themselves as individuals, the world as inanimate, other people as competitive but capable of cooperation, and action as necessary for survival. Do these assumptions mean that a particular individual should become a businessperson or a social worker, a voter or a nonvoter, a deductive or an inductive reasoner? While individuals' decisions in these areas will reflect the basic cultural assumptions, they are likely to be based on personal preferences that are less abstract, less generalized, and less organized. For instance, Americans buy automobiles, houses, and other physical possessions not so much because they assume that nature is exploitable but because they desire the material comfort and social status represented by these objects. They buy particular automobiles and houses largely based on personal preference.

The justification for inferring cultural assumptions becomes clear in a cross-cultural context. While Americans may differ in the reasons they give for their behavior and in the personal preferences they exhibit, the fact remains that they do not often start their mornings by placing small packets of rice (or potatoes) on the ground and in the bushes around their houses. In the United States, such behavior would be seen as eccentric at best while among Balinese Hindus the same behavior is considered normal. The Balinese and Indian assumption of an animated spirit world that needs feeding stands in contrast to the American assumption of an inanimate material world as an explanation of these

differing behavior patterns. Other stark contrasts like this one and many more subtle differences among cultures indicate that generally accepted behavior in cultures is consistent with specifiable basic assumptions.

While cultural assumptions refer to basic beliefs about the nature of reality, *cultural values* refer to the goodness or desirability of certain actions or attitudes among members of the culture. As such, values prescribe which actions and ways of being are better than others. In their comprehensive review of all the different ways in which the term *value* has been used, Clyde Kluckhohn et al. (1951) conclude that the one idea common to all usages is that of "oughtness." Like assumptions, values are not in themselves behavior. Rather, they are processes that govern what people in a particular culture agree they ought to do.

Material comfort is an example of an American cultural value. Americans are therefore likely to decide that they should install central heating or air-conditioning in their homes to neutralize the extremes of cold and heat. The Japanese, who generally value remaining close to nature over material comfort, might decide under similar circumstances to use space heaters for winter and fans for the summer. Besides acting as criteria for guiding behavior, the values of both Americans and Japanese have cognitive and emotional content. Americans have the concept of furnaces, radiators, and heat controls. They can also see their furnaces and remember the smell of the heat coming on early in the fall; as for the air-conditioning, they sense the coldness, hear the noise, and feel the draft. The combination of concept and emotion makes climate control a part of the American reality. So, in general, values provide the criteria for guiding behavior because they possess content and emotion and they contribute to social reality (see Robin Williams 1970, 440).

Explicitly avoided in the usage of value are particular preferences of individuals, such as choices in air conditioners, foods, cars, magazines, etc. To include this meaning under value would make the concept too broad to have utility since cultural generalizations would become lost in the myriad of individual variation to be found in any culture. This variation reflects personality differences and remains in the province of individual psychology. But beyond personal preferences, there are important subcultural variations as noted by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck.

> In most of the analyses of the common value element in culture patterning, the dominant values of peoples have been overstressed and *variant* values largely ignored.... Our most basic assumption is that there is a *systematic variation* in the realm of cultural phenomena which is both as definite and as essential as the demonstrated systematic variation in physical and biological phenomena (1961, 3).

While acknowledging the importance of subcultural variation in values, the cross-cultural analysis in this book requires a deliberate focus upon the dominant value pattern of middle-class Americans. Variant patterns will be introduced only for the purpose of avoiding too great a distortion of American society. In finding contrasting examples from other societies, we shall again turn to the dominant regularities, rather than to intracultural variations. We are aware, however, that we shall not be able to do full justice to the rich diversities found in either American middle-class society or in non-Western cultures.

Yet another case of deviation from the dominant value orientation occurs when behavior is geared to fulfill an expectation rather than driven by the value. For example, Americans may attempt to behave in ways that seem to fulfill the social expectations of self-reliance. To see themselves as self-reliant, they might take some action that does not really reflect the value of self-reliance, for example, taking out a loan from a bank rather than borrowing from relatives. In other words, people will sometimes attempt to fulfill social stereotypes of what they should be. We shall use the term *social norm* to refer to this kind of surface conformity with social expectations.

Behavioral Prescriptions

In concluding this conceptualization of the cross-cultural problem, it is appropriate to consider the possibility of providing Americans going abroad, or foreigners in the United States, with a list of dos and don'ts. Why not tell Americans never to point their feet at a person when in Thailand, not to pat a child on the head in Laos, always to use polite and flowery expressions in Saudi Arabia, and not to expect punctuality in Guatemala. In short, it should be possible to draw up a list of behaviors ranging from those that are desirable to those that are taboo. This approach is misleading for two major reasons.

The evaluation of behavior as desirable or taboo pursues the elusive goal of objectivity. Behavior is concrete but ambiguous: the same action may have different meanings in different situations, so it is necessary to identify the context of behavior and the contingencies of action before sojourners can be armed with prescriptions for specific acts. Fulfillment of this strategy is impossible since the enumeration of possible events lies beyond the state of the knowledge of human behavior. In addition, knowledge of the individuals with whom sojourners will be working would be required. This information is seldom available and where found is inadequate. The illusion of mastering desirable and taboo actions places blinders on Americans and foreigners alike, invites inflexibility, and falls short of equipping them for effective interaction.

When simplistic behavioral prescriptions are discarded, sojourners need some other method for diagnosing problems and predicting success-ful courses of action. It can be argued that Americans abroad—particularly in innovator roles—should act neither as Americans nor as host nationals. In particular, "going native" is neither possible nor desirable. Ideally, sojourners should adopt a third culture (Useem, Useem, and Donoghue 1963) based on expanded cross-cultural understanding. The first step in doing this is to know the assumptions and values upon which one's own behavior rests. Equipped with this crucial foundation, sojourners must be able to systematically contrast these assumptions and values with those of the host culture and discover the areas of cultural difference that are relevant to their particular situations. This knowledge can be used initially to empathize with the different feelings and expectations of host country nationals. Finally, relationships with foreign associates and mutual knowledge of relevant cultural differences can be used to create the unique common ground required for successful intercultural communication.

CULTURAL PATTERNS
OF PERCEPTION
AND THINKING

In everyday small talk among Americans, the subject of perception repeatedly crops up. American conversation is sprinkled with words such as "see," "hear," and "perceive." People will say "I hear that...," or someone may ask, "What do you see happening now?" A common statement is "I saw what was coming next."

The number and variety of references to perception and its synonyms suggest that the concept is diffuse and ambiguous. Americans speaking in English use the concept with two distinct meanings. For instance, if a hiker out on a trek says, "From the mountain, I saw the village in the valley," perception is an observation in which physical features of the world register in the brain. But when the same hiker then says, "I saw that it was time to turn back and descend to the village," perception is like a judgment, referring to an appraisal of a situation.

Based on these observations, we can see that human perception re-sembles a Janus-like figure consisting of two faces, one looking inward and one looking outward (Platt 1968, 63-64). The inward-looking face is associated with subjective processes of perceiving and thinking such as per-spective, intuition, opinions, and beliefs. The outward-looking face moni-tors features of the physical world and registers sensory impressions of objects which in the case of "vision," for instance, are attributes such as shape, color, texture, and size. The outward face of perception is objec-tive; only imperceptibly does it shade off into the subjective and inward face. Table 1 is a visual rendition of the perception/thinking process.

We have adopted an old convention to analyze the three principal mental processes depicted in the table: sensing, perceiving, and thinking. Within this tradition, sensing and perceiving are at the surface and relate to apprehension of the external world while thinking takes on depth as in the expression "deep thoughts." Actually, perception lies between sensation and thought and links them, and it is in this linking that the human mental process manifests its Janus-like nature—with one face glancing outward toward the surface while the second face looks inward, "buried in thought."

The fourth and deepest process, encoding or the creation of symbol systems, merges with thinking but also suggests a special thought-driven use of percepts for communication—as in the sounds of a Beethoven symphony, the visual imagery of the Statue of Liberty, and the signs of written English. With mathematics, the last traces of surface or sensory stimuli have vanished.

The four processes, listed in the right-hand column in Table 1, have counterparts in structure listed in the left-hand column. Beginning with sensation at the surface, proceeding to perception, cognition, and ending with symbol systems, each structure closely parallels the four processes in column three. Our focus will be on how the structure and processes are manifest in the product, column two.

Table 1.   Representation of Human Experience

STRUCTURE	PRODUCT	PROCESS
Sensation	Sensory Stimuli	Sensing
S • U • R • F • A • C • E		
Perception	Percept Perceptual Objects Images Concepts	Perceiving
Thought/ Cognition	Patterns of Thinking	Thinking
Complex Symbol Systems	Pictorial Style Musical Form Language Mathematics	Encoding/ Symbolizing

Deep Mind

This asks deep thought: an eye within the mind,
Keen as a diver salving sunken freight,
To sink into the depth, yet searching there,
Not lose itself in roving phantasies;
That all end well and mischief follow not
First for the State, which is our chief concern,
Then for ourselves; . . .

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