

# 3

## THE ELEMENTS OF CULTURE

This chapter discusses conceptualizations of the main elements of culture, mainly through an operationalist perspective (operationalism is explained in 5.4.1.). Other approaches to the unpackaging of culture, rooted in different schools of thought, are also possible. Yet, operationalizations of abstract concepts are needed to understand the empirical realities that they target.

This chapter briefly dwells on what can be called particular elements of culture: those that are found in small numbers of societies or are so specific that they make cross-cultural comparisons hard or impossible. Then, it devotes much greater attention to components that have a universal or near-universal character, at least across modern nations and ethnic groups, and can therefore be used for the purpose of hologicistic cross-cultural analysis.

### ◆ 3.1. Particular Elements of Culture

There are various visible cultural artifacts that one cannot easily use for the purpose of hologetic cultural comparisons. For example, at the beginning of March, Bulgarians and Romanians wear *martenitsas* on their lapels: red and white figures of various shapes, sizes, and materials that may have been used to bring good luck in the past but are simply worn for fun today. One can compare only two ethnicities in terms of the physical appearance of *martenitsas*, the way that they are used, and the meanings that are attached to them.

Elements of subjective culture can also fall in this category. The classic example is meanings: Some may be so culture specific as to be incomparable quantitatively across many societies. Symbols, another group of particular elements of culture, are closely associated with them (Cohen, 1974; Griswold, 1994). So can be rituals and even heroes, which may also be considered components of culture (Hofstede, 2001).

Taboos are another example of particular elements of culture. Many of them have a very limited distribution. In Bulgaria, hardly anybody would think of giving an even number of flowers to a woman; only odd numbers are acceptable. A study of this rare taboo cannot be used for the development of a universal cultural model because no large-scale comparisons with many other societies are possible.

Institutions are also an interesting case. Depending on one's preference, they can be viewed as completely independent of culture, as influenced by it, or as part of it. There is some inevitable subjectivity in deciding how to classify institutions as well as some objective facts that need to be considered in some cases. For instance, one may defend the view that forms of marriage, such as polygyny versus monogamy,

should be considered extensions of a society's culture. However, viewing different forms of government—say, kingdom versus republic—as cultural phenomena in the 21st century is hardly useful, as it is not easy to predict and explain any significant societal traits through these particular forms of government.

Even if an institution seems like part of culture or an extension of it, it may be culture specific and thus unsuitable for a comparative study whose goal is to identify cultural regularities. The Icelandic government around AD 1000 is a case in point. At that time, the supreme political power in Iceland resided in an institution called *althingi*, reminiscent of a national general assembly in the sense that it made important political decisions such as the adoption of Christianity. It also had legislative functions and, interestingly, acted as a court of law that heard cases and pronounced verdicts and sentences. Yet, Iceland did not have an executive branch of government. Once a person was found guilty of a crime and sentenced, the case was closed; the role of the government stopped there. It was up to any private party with a stake in the matter to see to it that the sentence was carried out. This combination of peculiarities gives medieval Icelandic government a unique identity and makes it hard to use in a cross-cultural comparison that aims to identify cultural patterns.

Schwartz (2011) advocated measuring culture through proverbs and popular books (p. 314). He did not explain how exactly such measurements could be taken, and there is no known sound methodology for comparing texts for the purpose of quantitative hologetic cross-cultural analysis. Many proverbs are culture specific. Others have only partial equivalents across societies. Besides, studying a nation's proverbs for the purpose of learning something about its culture can be a very confusing experience. For example, Bulgarians have a close equivalent to "Every cloud has a silver lining," but

they also say that every misfortune brings another misfortune. According to one Bulgarian proverb, work embellishes people while laziness makes them ugly. But another proverb states that the only thing one can gain from work is a humpback. So what do we learn about Bulgarians from these proverbs? Are they optimists or pessimists? Do they worship work or hate it? Or are they simply confused people?

The particular elements of culture are studied mostly by ethnographers, adopting a descriptivist approach and idiographic interpretations (see 4.3.). These methods run the risk of being unscientific and may lack predictive properties since interpretations are subjective human fabrications. Because the particular elements of culture are hard to compare in a way that allows the identification of broad cultural patterns, they remain largely outside the interests of researchers who focus on global cultural variation.

### ◆ 3.2. *Universal Elements of Culture*

The following sections are devoted to elements of culture that are assumed to have a universal nature and can be measured hologeistically, at least across modern societies, but often across preliterate ones as well. That can be done in different ways. A commonly used method to study the software of the mind is to collect self-reports. The respondents are asked to say something about themselves: what is important or unimportant to them, what they approve or disapprove of, what they believe, what they like or dislike, what they do, or what kind of persons they are. Scholars who use this approach assume, often correctly, that they will tap and measure universal phenomena, such as happiness, religiousness, or attitudes toward gender equality. The assumption is that all societies in the world can be compared on these concepts

because they make sense everywhere, provided they are explained in an appropriate language. Some behaviors—such as murder and sex—also have a universal character; therefore, they justify comparisons of societies in terms of various statistics related to them.

#### 3.2.1. *SELF-REPORTS*

Self-reports are the most common outcome of paper-and-pencil studies in hologeistic cross-cultural analysis. Strictly speaking, self-reports are statements that respondents make about themselves. Yet some of the statements that they make about others can also provide information about the respondents. In a more general sense, these statements can also be viewed as self-reports, albeit implicit.

##### 3.2.1.1. *Values*

Values are an important element of culture, as social behavior is viewed as partly caused by dominant values and ideologies (Leung & Bond, 1989).<sup>1</sup> An early and pioneering study of managers' values, based on Abraham Maslow's concepts, was carried out by Haire, Ghiselli, and Porter (1966), covering 11 countries. Milestone cross-cultural projects that have measured values are those by Hofstede (1980, 2001), the Chinese Culture Connection (1987), Schwartz (1994), and Inglehart and Baker (2000).

In terms of their operationalization, values are usually studied by asking people what is important to them in their own lives and how important it is. The answers obtained in this way reflect *personal* values: those that individuals consider important to themselves, as opposed to what they may wish for others to consider important. This crucially important distinction is explained in the next section. From this operationalist perspective, values can be defined as whatever people describe or select as personally important

or unimportant over a long period of their lives, usually expressed as abstract nouns. Examples of concepts that people have rated in that way are religion, work, leisure, family, and friends.

Theoretical definitions of values, such as the one proposed by Kluckhohn (1967) can be quite diffuse: “A value is a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means and ends of actions” (p. 395). More recent theoretical definitions are narrower. They associate values with goals or guiding principles. According to Schwartz and Bardi (2001), values are “desirable, transsituational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in people’s lives” (p. 269). “Transsituational” is an important characteristic of values. If a person said, “It is important to me to be on time for the party tonight,” that would not reveal what is normally studied under the heading of “values” in cross-cultural research. But a more general statement—“It is important to me to always be on time”—reveals that the person who has made that pronouncement values punctuality.

Theoretical definitions are interesting, and perhaps somewhat helpful, yet we must not forget that values are a subjective human construct. The problem with any abstract theoretical definition of a subjective construct, not specifying how the construct should be measured, is that it can create confusion with other constructs. Consider this definition of personality traits, which are a very different domain of study: “dimensions of individual differences in the tendencies to show consistent patterns of thoughts, feelings, and actions” (McCrae, 2009). Do we have a clear distinction between values and personality traits on the basis of this definition and Schwartz and Bardi’s (2001) definition of values? Minkov (2011) provides the following example. Imagine that a group of people has told us that power and dominance are very important to

them. Researchers would conventionally interpret this as an indication that the group scores high on power and dominance as a value: Their guiding principle in life is to strive to dominate others. Now suppose that the respondents have described themselves as “power seeking” and “dominant.” This format would be interpreted by psychologists as a self-description that reflects a personality trait: a consistent pattern of thought or action. In both cases, researchers are studying the same reality, distinguished mainly by the wordings of the questionnaire items. Nothing else unambiguously differentiates dominance as a value from dominance as a personality trait.

Schwartz et al. (2001) admit that the same term can refer to a value or goal and a trait but argue that the two are distinguishable: One may value creativity without being creative. Creativity is an ability (perhaps not exactly the same as a personality trait such as the Big Five), and it is certainly possible to value an ability that one does not possess. But is it possible to value honesty (a personality trait) while being a crook? Or can one strive to achieve dominance as an important goal in life (a value) while being submissive (a trait)?<sup>2</sup>

Further blurring the conceptual difference between values and traits, Schwartz (2011) indicated that “valuing achievement may be a socially approved transformation of the trait of aggressiveness” and “traits may transform into different values in different societies” (p. 311). And Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz, and Knafo (2002) found high correlations between values and Big Five personality traits across individuals.

Admittedly, confusions between values and personality traits have not been known to generate serious research problems. But a failure to distinguish values from what should probably be called “norms” or “ideologies” has sparked heated academic conflicts that could have been avoided if values and norms had been

defined through their operationalizations; that is, the types of questions used for their measurement. This is one of the topics of the next section.

Another controversial issue, most recently discussed by Schwartz (2011), is the operationalization of, and difference between, individual and cultural (societal) values. A measure of the former can be obtained by asking individuals what is important to them. But how do we arrive at cultural values? By aggregating individual responses? While acknowledging that this is common research practice, Schwartz is not convinced of its merits, since his own research has revealed quite low within-society agreement around values.<sup>3</sup>

Some authors (most recently Knafo, Roccas, & Sagiv, 2011) endorse a definition of nation-level values as “shared, abstract ideas of what is good, right, and desirable in a society” (p. 179). The last part of this definition is reminiscent of Hofstede’s (2011) concept of “values as the desirable”: that is, norms or ideologies as to what people in society should value or how they should behave. The reader is referred to the next section, which stresses the point that the values people endorse at a personal level and those they view as desirable for others may have nothing to do with each other. As for the sharedness of values, norms, and ideologies or any other element of culture, this issue was treated in 2.1., where it was argued that it is actually a nonissue: There is no need to assume any level of sharedness.

According to the operationalist philosophy of this book, it is of little practical use to engage in purely theoretical debates on the nature of the hypothesized difference between personal and societal values. Like any other subjective human construct, societal values can be whatever people decide they are. The practically useful question is what to study and how to study it to obtain meaningful information about societies: a set of statistical data that can be used to predict other data. For that purpose, it certainly makes sense to

ask individuals what they consider important in their own lives and aggregate their answers to a societal level. What exactly these aggregates will be called—“societal values” or something else—is of no practical importance as long as they have interesting and important correlates and as long as we do not use confusing terminologies: similar terms for operationally different measures.

A note on Rokeach’s (1968) distinction between instrumental and terminal values is also in order. The examples that he provides of the former—“broadminded, clean, forgiving, responsible” (p. 23)—suggest that, from an operationalist perspective, these should be considered personality traits, which Rokeach probably perceived as positive. One can certainly paraphrase these adjectives as nouns and ask the respondents if they value broadmindedness or forgiveness in their own lives; in that case, these items would become questions about values. How useful it is to ask such questions—which may amount to inquiring if the respondents wish that they possessed certain personality traits—and what the answers would predict is an altogether different issue that can only be answered empirically.

It might also be useful to note that the term “values” has been applied to statements in various other formats. Leung and Bond (2008) used the term “values” about judgments of what is good or bad. In the terminology of this book, these would be attitudes (3.2.1.7.).

### 3.2.1.2. *Norms and Ideologies*

Norms, or ideologies, are also an important cultural phenomenon. They are often studied together with other elements of culture, as in Hofstede (1980, 2001), Inglehart and Baker (2000), and Smith, Dugan, and Trompenaars (1996). A large-scale cross-cultural study, with a large section devoted entirely to norms or ideologies (although the authors somewhat confusingly called them “values”),

was executed by Project GLOBE (House et al., 2004).

Norms or ideologies can be conceptualized, and consequently operationalized, in different ways. In much of the existing research, respondents are asked what people in general should or should not do, or what they should or should not be. It seems that when respondents answer such questions, they usually describe the desirable values, behaviors, or states of mind that they wish to see in others, which may or may not overlap with the values, behaviors, or states of mind that they consider acceptable for themselves. As we need a special term for these answers, “norms” or “ideologies” would be quite appropriate.

Respondents’ formulations of norms and ideologies are not pure self-reports. Still, they reveal important information about the respondents. For example, “Women should be subservient to men” is a norm or ideology about the desirable behavior of women and men other than the respondent, but it speaks volumes about the respondent who has enunciated it.

Some authors (for example, Gelfand, Nishii, & Raver, 2006) see values as “internal” and norms as “external influences on behavior.” A person may not attach a great importance to religion as a personal value in an Islamic society where the prevalent norm is to be guided by religious principles. Still, that person may refrain from eating in public during the month of Ramadan for fear of transgressing the generally accepted norm. But no norm can be enforced if it does not coincide with the personally endorsed values of the majority. Therefore, we do not have a good distinction between values and norms in terms of “internal” and “external influences on behavior”: What is an external influence to somebody must be an internal value to most other people in the same society or else it would not produce an impact.

Murdock (1940) provided a consequentialist description of norms: One can expect sanctions to nonconformity

to norms. Again, we do not have a good distinction between values and norms. If a particular society vigorously punishes the transgression of a norm that means it is actually a strongly held value by many people; otherwise, they would not bother to enforce it.

According to Fischer et al. (2009), “self-referenced values” are about “what is important to me,” whereas “descriptive norms” are about “what is important to most people” (p. 190). Like the previous definitions, these do not indicate how values and norms should be studied so as to be distinguished. If descriptive norms are important to most people, then they can be studied by asking representative samples what is important to them personally; thus, there is no difference between values and norms. It turns out that norms are simply values with a high degree of sharedness.

The operationalist distinction between values and norms or ideologies proposed here is crucial. Norms, as prescriptions and ideologies for the desirable values and behaviors of others, may coincide with one’s own values or be radically different from them. A person who says “Religion is very important to me” would probably also agree with the statement that all people should be religious, which reflects a norm or ideology. But a person who values power would have nothing to gain if others also strived for it (Smith, 2006) and would prescribe submissiveness as a norm for others. Similarly, from the viewpoint of mating competition theory (Barber, 2006, 2007; Buss & Duntley, 2003; Duntley & Buss, 2004), a man who is pursuing sexual relationships with many women, and values promiscuity, would not gain anything by prescribing the same value to others because that would create unwanted competition. His ideology for them would most likely be sexual restraint.

Minkov (2011) refers to various real-life situations to illustrate this point. According to the World Values Survey,

sub-Saharan African populations, including Nigerians, are overwhelmingly opposed to free sex. However, a number of studies by Western and African scholars have provided evidence of extensive sexual networking in Nigeria and other African countries (Caldwell, 2000, 2002; Orubuloye, Caldwell, & Caldwell, 1992, 1997). This suggests that sexual restraint is endorsed as an ideology for others in much of Africa, but not necessarily as a personal value and behavior. Similarly, Minkov points out that there is abundant research evidence that corruption is denounced throughout the world, yet it is extremely widespread in all poor countries, where it is not the prerogative of sleazy politicians but is often initiated by ordinary citizens. The underlying philosophy seems to be “Corruption is an awful thing unless I can benefit from it.”<sup>4</sup>

This is an extremely important point to remember. Until recently, personal values and those that people prescribe to others (that is, norms or ideologies) were confused. For example, they were not clearly distinguished by Milton Rokeach (1968), an influential author on the subject of values:

To say that a person “has a value” is to say that he has an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally and socially preferable to alternative modes of conduct or end-states of existence. (p. 16)

This definition seems to merge what one desires for oneself with what people desire for their society. Kluckhohn’s (1967) definition, which was already quoted, does not differentiate between values and ideologies either. Yet it is important for researchers to distinguish between them just as they are often distinguished in the answers of respondents to value-format items and norm-format items. Therefore, it is hard to agree with Javidan, House, Dorfman, and Sully de Luque (2006), who argue that

as to Hofstede’s point that GLOBE measured ideologies through its “should-be” items, our view is that introducing yet another label is not helpful. There is no shortage of labels in the literature, and adding another concept without clarity or depth adds to the confusion. (p. 903)

In this particular case, there is an evident shortage of clear terms, and it is very helpful to understand what exactly researchers will tap when they ask respondents what is important to them or what people in general should or should not do or be.<sup>5</sup>

The distinction between values and norms that this book proposes can help resolve some major controversies in the academic literature. An example is the exchange between Geert Hofstede and Project GLOBE in which others have also been involved (Hofstede, 2006; Javidan et al., 2006; Smith, 2006). A failure to see the difference between personal values and ideologies for others has also resulted in frequent misunderstandings of what Hofstede’s (1980, 2001) “uncertainty avoidance” dimension actually measures.<sup>6</sup>

### 3.2.1.3. *Values for Children*

The World Values Survey asks its respondents to choose from a list of traits or values that children should learn. An item of this type can be viewed as a combination of a norm and a value. If we are guided by the wording of the item, it asks the respondents to formulate norms or ideologies for other people: desirable values for children. But it most likely also reflects the respondents’ personal values that they will attempt to instill in their own children.<sup>7</sup>

### 3.2.1.4. *Beliefs*

Beliefs are expressed as agreements or disagreements with worldviews: The respondents are asked if they agree with various statements, most often about what

they consider true or false. They are part of many cross-cultural projects, one of which, discussed in Bond et al. (2004) (see 9.16.), was entirely a study of beliefs. Like norms, some beliefs can be formulated about other people (“I agree that most people are dishonest”) and in that sense they are not pure self-reports. Still, they can contain information about the respondent. A person who endorses the statement that most people are dishonest avows a cynical social outlook.

Leung et al. (2002) reviewed the literature on beliefs and concluded that despite the different definitions, they typically refer to a perceived relationship between two objects or concepts. Another conclusion was that there are different types of beliefs, some of which are more general than others. These may be labeled “general expectancies” (p. 288). Because they are characterized by a high level of abstraction, they are viewed as being likely to relate to social behaviors. Leung et al. (2002) call these beliefs “social axioms” because, just like in mathematics, these are “basic premises that people endorse and use to guide their behavior in different situations” (p. 288). A longer definition runs as follows (Bond et al., 2004): “Social axioms are generalized beliefs about oneself, the social and physical environment, or the spiritual world, and are in the form of an assertion about the relationship between two entities or concepts” (p. 553).

The study of beliefs is useful because they may have important social functions (Leung et al., 2002). Measures of beliefs in the World Values Survey and in Bond et al. (2004) have strong predictive properties with respect to external variables and reveal interesting cross-cultural differences.

#### 3.2.1.5. Behavioral Intentions

Behavioral intentions can be studied by asking people what they would do in a certain situation. The best-known large-scale cross-cultural project that was partly a

study of behavioral intentions is described by Smith et al. (1996) (see 9.5.). As that study showed, behavioral intentions and norms are not exactly the same thing. One may agree with the norm that people should not do something, while still being intent on doing it.

#### 3.2.1.6. Self-Reported Behaviors

In many studies, including the World Values Survey, respondents have been asked to describe their behaviors, for instance, how often they go to religious services or spend time with friends or how many sexual partners they have had. These reports represent statements that may or may not reflect real behaviors; therefore, studies of this kind are not studies of behaviors per se. For the sake of precision, they should be called “self-reported behaviors.”

#### 3.2.1.7. Attitudes

Attitudes are studied by asking people what or whom they like or dislike. The format of the items can be quite diverse, but in all cases the responses that they elicit can be linked to the following definition of attitudes: “evaluative statements—either favorable or unfavorable—concerning objects, people, or events” (Robbins, 1998, p. 140).<sup>8</sup>

Practical examples of studies of attitudes are provided by the World Values Survey. Its researchers show or read to the respondent a list of different groups—people of another race, foreigners, homosexuals, people with a criminal record, and so forth—and ask which of these the respondents would not like to have as neighbors. The answers reflect attitudes, showing who is disliked. Another common method to study attitudes is to ask whether something—for example, the performance of the national government—is good or bad.

#### 3.2.1.8. Self-Descriptions

In a sense, all previously examined elements of culture, and especially values,



beliefs, and behavioral intentions, can be viewed as indirect self-descriptions. This section focuses on direct self-descriptions in which the respondents describe themselves explicitly in terms of adjectives, verbs, and nouns, usually starting with, or implying, the phrase “I am.”

When the adjectives in the respondents’ self-descriptions refer to stable dispositions, they can be viewed as referring to personality traits. Major cross-cultural studies of personality traits are described by McCrae (2002), McCrae and Terracciano (2005), and Schmitt et al. (2007) (9.13., 9.14., 9.15.). The World Values Survey also contains questions that elicit self-descriptions: The respondents are asked how happy or healthy they feel, or how proud of their nations they are.<sup>9</sup>

It is also possible to ask the respondents to describe themselves in terms of verbs. Kuppens, Ceulemans, Timmerman, Diener, and Kim-Prieto (2006) carried out a large cross-cultural study in which they asked the respondents to depict themselves in that way. Note that what they studied would not be considered personality traits or stable dispositions by personality psychologists because the respondents were asked to indicate what positive and negative emotions they felt during the previous week or during the interview. Self-descriptions in verbs that target stable dispositions, and can therefore be viewed as personality traits, are available in the World Values Survey. For example, the respondents are asked to indicate how much personal life control they perceive in principle.

Respondents can also be asked to describe themselves in terms of nouns. These may be self-identifications, such as Muslim, Christian, or Jew, that are not strongly associated with the other elements of culture described in this chapter. Yet, some of these self-descriptions may be highly correlated with cultural elements such as values. An example is the World Values Survey item that asks the respondents if they are religious persons, which

in fact is a combination of an adjective and a noun.

### 3.2.2. REPORTS OF IMPRESSIONS OF OTHERS

Another way to study societal phenomena related to culture is to ask the respondents to describe other people. There are various methods, described below.

#### 3.2.2.1. Peer Reports

In the case of peer reports, respondents are asked to think of somebody they know well and describe that person. Then, the descriptions can be aggregated to the national level so that country means are obtained. This method has been used in studies of national differences in Big Five personality traits, for instance, by McCrae and Terracciano (2005).

#### 3.2.2.2. Idealistic Reports

The term “idealistic” can be used broadly to refer to various descriptions of hypothetical persons as the respondents would like or hate them to be. An example is Fiedler’s (1967) Least Preferred Co-Worker questionnaire in which the respondents describe people with whom they would work least well. Project GLOBE’s study of leadership (Dorfman, Hanges, & Brodbeck, 2004) can probably also be classified in this category: The respondents were asked to assess how much a particular behavior or characteristic inhibits a hypothetical person from being an outstanding leader or contributes to that person being an outstanding leader. Of course, GLOBE’s leadership items can also be conceptualized as beliefs; the only difference is the wording.

#### 3.2.2.3. Stereotypes

Stereotypes are measured by asking respondents to summarize their impressions of a group of people, of which they may or may not be members, or a social

and political entity such as a country, which may or may not be their own. Items that elicit stereotypes may start with “Most people in this society . . .” or “Generally, this society . . .,” followed by what people in that society seem to do, or the collective traits that they or the society appear to possess.

Studies of stereotypes can be divided into two main categories. Some researchers have studied the stereotypical views that the members of one nation hold of those of another nation, or of its culture (Boster & Maltseva, 2006; Marin & Salazar, 1985; Peabody, 1985; Wilterdink, 1992). The utility of these studies transpires most clearly in the international business literature that employs the concept of psychic distance (Tung & Verbeke, 2010): the subjective distance between two societies as perceived by their members. Psychic distance is believed to affect various decisions in international business and is therefore deemed to be worth studying.

Other researchers have studied the stereotypical views that people have of their fellow countrymen and women and their cultures, known as “auto-stereotypes” or “self-stereotypes.” Some of the studies in this category explicitly mentioned that they targeted stereotypes (Terracciano et al., 2005); their goal was to show that such stereotypes are false. In other studies, the notion of stereotypes is missing (for instance, in House et al., 2004; Kostova & Roth, 2002; Kuppens et al., 2006; Ralston, Egri, De la Garza Carranza, Ramburuth, et al., 2009; etc.). Nevertheless, this kind of research also captures stereotypes. For example, Kostova and Roth (2002) asked company employees whether “people in this country know a great deal about quality,” and whether “people in this country care a great deal about the quality of their work” (p. 233). Studies of this type reflect a belief that the information obtained from the responses will be trustworthy.

It is possible to obtain stereotypical descriptions of any of the previously discussed elements of culture that are

normally measured by means of self-reports. If respondents are asked to describe the behaviors of their fellow countrymen and women (as in Javidan, 2004), they will provide stereotypical summaries of perceived behaviors. If they are asked about the average personality traits that they observe in their society, as in the measurement of Project GLOBE’s humane orientation practices (Kabasakal & Bodur, 2004), they will provide stereotypical descriptions of personality traits as they perceive them.

Attitudes or ideologies can also be described stereotypically. Kuppens et al. (2006) presented their respondents from 48 nations with lists of emotions and, among other things, asked them the following questions (as a single item) concerning some of those emotions: “How appropriate and valued is each of the following emotions in your society? Do people approve of this emotion?” (p. 501). This is a study of stereotypical perceptions of other people’s attitudes or ideologies. Some World Values Survey items also resemble stereotypes, as they ask respondents to describe the collective performance of the government members in their countries.

In the cross-cultural literature, stereotypes have been defined as “attributes thought to be characteristic of a group or contrasting groups” (McCrae, Terracciano, Realo, & Allik, 2007, p. 957).<sup>10</sup> A similar definition of stereotyping was adopted by Boster and Maltseva (2006), “attributing to each individual in a group the features that are viewed as inherent in group membership” (p. 49). The similarity in the two definitions is only superficial because the first does not imply that stereotypes are applied to each individual in a group: “Characteristic of a group” allows for exceptions to the general rule. One can hold the opinion that most Germans are punctual although some are not. But if we adopt the first definition, that could still be a stereotype. McCrae et al. (2007)

and Terracciano et al. (2005), however, actually expanded and clarified their definition by adding another defining feature of stereotypes, especially when they represent descriptions of groups in terms of personality traits: They are untrue.

As we will see later in this section, whether a generalized description of a group of people can be validated or not is a very complex issue. In line with the operationalist approach of this book, the concept of stereotypes proposed here is restricted to the research instruments that are used to reveal them. Thus, the defining feature of a stereotype is its operationalization as a general statement about a complex entity, such as a nation or a society. Outside the context of the research instrument, it is possible to have an endless debate on what is or is not a stereotype.

There are divergent views in the academic literature about the validity of auto-stereotypes. Some anthropologists seem to believe that ordinary people are so knowledgeable about the culture that they live in that they can provide a reliable account of it through stereotypical descriptions. According to Haviland (1990), “because they share a common culture, people can predict how others are most likely to behave in a given circumstance and react accordingly” (p. 30). This is a debatable position. Naturally, without some predictability, any society would fall apart. But the degree to which people’s actions can be predicted by laypersons depends on many factors. In a complex modern society, it is impossible to predict behaviors in a wide range of situations without sophisticated scientific studies. Otherwise, there would be no need for marketing experts, consumer behavior analysts, political scientists, and personality and social psychologists. We could simply ask a couple of randomly chosen people in the street whether a particular chocolate brand would be successful or how the next election would turn out.

Project GLOBE (House et al., 2004) is, among other things, the largest cross-cultural study of stereotypes to date (see 9.17.). The GLOBE researchers asked the respondents to describe prevalent practices and generalized personality traits in their own societies. Because they obtained an acceptably high level of agreement among the respondents, they concluded that their results were valid. Arguably, if most people in a particular society agree that the typical or average person in that society is “nice,” this is sufficient evidence that the typical person is indeed nice. Yet, the logic behind the idea that whenever people reach full agreement on a particular statement we have information that can be taken at face value is flawed. Suppose that we register full agreement among the respondents of a particular society with the statement “People in this society are extremely intelligent” or even “People in this society are the most intelligent in the world.” What do we learn from such statements? Most likely, they only reflect an inflated collective self-regard and contain no real information about collective intelligence. Of course, self-descriptions may also suffer from similar biases; one should not accept a statement such as “I am extremely intelligent” as hard currency that needs no validation test. The only way to validate a measure, be it a stereotype or a self-description, is to find convincing correlations between that measure and relevant external variables.

McCrae et al. (2007) and Terracciano et al. (2005) presented evidence that when people are asked to guess the personality traits of their fellow citizens, their guesses are quite far from the citizens’ averaged self-reports.<sup>11</sup> Which of the two should we believe then? According to these authors, stereotype-based methods for the study of national personality yield results that do not contain a kernel of truth. One main reason for that conclusion is that when countries are plotted on a map based on personality stereotypes scores, there are no recognizable geographic or cultural

patterns. Nigerians are surrounded by a loose configuration of Icelanders, Americans, Argentines, Poles, Turks, Ugandans, and Croatians. A tight cluster at the opposite end of the map is formed by Canadians, Indians, Burkinabes, and Batswanas. There is also a fairly distinct cluster of Turks, Chileans, Indonesians, Croatians, and Moroccans (Figure 1 in McCrae et al., 2007). As the authors point out, such configurations do not make any sense. There is no reason why Canadians should have drastically different personalities from Americans and cluster together with Indians and Burkinabes, while Hong Kong Chinese cluster with Hungarians and Poles. There is also no logical reason for China's position on the stereotype-based personality map: Its closest neighbor is Sweden.

Consider also the following example. Item E124 in the World Values Survey studies before 2005 asks the respondents how much respect for human rights there is today in their countries. The item effectively asks for a stereotypical summary of an important aspect of the behavior of the countries' rulers, yet the respondents are not necessarily knowledgeable and objective political analysts. First, they may be unaware of the real situation in their country. Second, it is not clear what they understand by "human rights." Therefore, some of the answers to this item are likely to be unreliable. The results confirm this hypothesis.<sup>12</sup> Smith (2006) cites research that illustrates the same point. Asked to guess how important the values in the Schwartz Values Survey are to their fellow citizens, respondents were correct about some values and completely wrong about others.<sup>13</sup>

Some authors hold the view that when those who produce the stereotypes are not ordinary people but highly educated intellectuals, they can reveal the actual state of affairs. Heine, Lehman, Peng, and Greenholtz (2002) asked various intellectuals to describe Japanese and Americans in various terms. The intellectuals were

not instructed to cite research findings concerning the cultures of these nations. In fact, many were not even anthropologists or cross-cultural psychologists; they were specialists in history, literature, geography, economics, art, and political science (p. 908). Still, they were invited to guess various psychological and cultural characteristics of the typical Japanese and American. Fischer (2009) discussed a similar approach to cross-cultural analysis called the "aggregate properties model" (p. 31). As an example, he mentioned that experts could be asked to rate the characteristics of various cultures in terms of dimensions such as individualism versus collectivism, religious practices, and so forth. But exercises of this kind have a proven tendency to go very wrong. Terracciano et al. (2005) discuss various experiments in which cultural experts were asked to rate the predominant personality traits of people in societies they were familiar with. A panel of experts in cross-cultural psychology did not match beyond chance the self-reported personality characteristics of people in a sample of 26 cultures. Comparisons by persons, supposedly very knowledgeable about U.S. and Filipino culture, failed to reproduce the self-reported personality traits of Americans and Filipinos.

When experts summarize the values of their fellow citizens without referring to reliable studies, the effect can be the same. In his *Cultural Anthropology*, Haviland (1990), an American cultural anthropologist, stated that Americans respected a number of values "in the abstract," such as "thrift," "hard work," and "independence" (p. 34). However, World Values Survey (2006) data from the year that Haviland's book was published revealed that this statement was misleading.<sup>14</sup>

This is not to say that all stereotypical descriptions are always impossible to validate. Heine, Buchtel, and Norenzayan (2008) found that some stereotypical descriptions of national character did predict conceptually plausible variables. Some

of Project GLOBE’s stereotypes are in fact meaningful dimensions of national culture that can be validated through external variables (see 9.17.). Generally speaking, stereotypes may be valid if they describe some salient practices or strong taboos in a particular society, especially if there is a high level of agreement among the respondents.<sup>15</sup> If a high percentage of respondents in an Arab country agree that “in this society, it is unacceptable for an unmarried couple to live together,” it is likely that the answer will reflect a real taboo. This can be proven through correlations with census data or other reliable sources, showing that it is indeed highly unusual in that particular society for unmarried couples to live together.

Stereotypes are widely used in studies of organizational culture or climate: The respondents are asked to summarize the situation “in this organization” (as in House et al., 2004). Alternatively, they may be asked to guess what their coworkers think or how they feel about certain issues (as in Ralston et al., 2009). Whether these stereotypes will reflect something that can be corroborated or not depends on what they are about. Assuming that no deliberate false reporting is involved, it is likely that if the respondents agree that it is unacceptable in their organization to be more than five minutes late for work, and if they tell us that hardly anybody ever breaks this rule, the real situation is probably as they describe it because everybody in the organization can be expected to be knowledgeable about it. It is far less clear if employees are competent to make an abstract evaluation to the effect that “the employees of this organization are encouraged to strive for high performance” and what these statements would correlate with even if they reach a high level of agreement. In studies of societies, one should be even more skeptical. The fact that 61.9% of the Vietnamese respondents in the World Values Survey tell us that the human rights situation in their country is excellent—a world record—does not mean

that their statements should be taken at face value and Vietnam is a paragon of human rights.

We can now close the discussion of stereotypes with a note on the difference between items that measure stereotypes and items that measure beliefs. Some beliefs may be formulated in such a way that they can resemble stereotypes. Consider this: “Old people are usually stubborn and biased” is an item used to measure social axioms (beliefs) by Bond et al. (2004, Table 1, p. 557). The respondents are asked to provide a stereotypical description of old people, and they are likely to think of the old people of their own country. What can make all the difference between a belief and a stereotype in this case is the subjective interpretation of the item. If we take it as a self-report (the respondents are divulging something about themselves), the revealed information is reminiscent of an attitude and probably tells us something meaningful *about the respondents*. If a lot of people in a particular society agree with that statement, we learn that they have a culture characterized by a cynical outlook toward old people. If the item is taken as a report on others (the respondents are attempting to tell us something real about old people in their country), the item captures a stereotype. The information about the old people that it targets may or may not be meaningful. It is a matter that cannot be resolved without an empirical study.

It may be hard to decide what information a statement about a group of people carries and whether the information reveals more about those who make the statement or those whom it describes. In the absence of a good methodology for the extraction of meaningful information from generalized statements about people, researchers are probably best advised for the time being to refrain from using such items unless they can clearly and convincingly demonstrate by means of empirical analyses what the items actually measure.<sup>16</sup>

### 3.2.3. MENTAL SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

The elements of culture that can be studied in terms of self-reports or reports on others can involve significant subjectivity. If for some reason the respondents decide to mislead the researcher, they can do that easily by deliberately providing untrue answers. Persons who go to church once a week may state that they go every day or once a year. Persons who hate foreigners may state that they like them. In that sense, the answer can be an inflated or deflated report and a correct or distorted representation of the real state of affairs. The available evidence from decades of cross-cultural analysis of self-reports shows that this is rarely a significant problem, but the possibility that it can arise should never be disregarded.

When the object of study is mental skills or knowledge, the respondents cannot inflate their results; one cannot pretend that one is more intelligent than one really is by solving more IQ items than one's general intelligence and knowledge permit. And because intelligence and knowledge tend to have positive connotations in most cultures, it is unlikely that many respondents would have an incentive to present themselves as more dull and ignorant than they really are by deliberately ignoring items that they can solve or by purposefully providing wrong answers. Therefore, studies of mental skills and knowledge are largely free of the potential subjectivity of self-reports and reports on others. Of course, they can be subjective in other ways, for instance, in terms of the choice of items in the battery that is administered to the respondents.

#### 3.2.3.1. General Intelligence and Related Domains

General intelligence, also known as the "g factor," is measured by means of various mental tasks collectively known as IQ tests. As general intelligence can be

defined in as many ways as culture, the readers are invited to consider what IQ tests represent instead of searching for a single best definition. What those tests have in common is that the respondents are presented with some seemingly disorganized and meaningless bits of information and requested to see a pattern or make a prediction.<sup>17</sup> Some of the typical objections that one may hear from laypersons, as well as some scholars, are "But why do exactly these tasks capture the nature of general intelligence?" and "Why not other tasks?" The answer to the first question is that "general intelligence" is a name of a specific scientific construct that may not and need not have anything to do with laypeople's (or some researchers') divergent concepts of how intelligence should be construed. From an operationalist perspective, the concept of general intelligence is derived from empirical measures and is not an arbitrary abstract concept for which measures are sought. The second question is also easy to answer. Tasks like those in the well-validated IQ tests are given because precisely one's performance on such tasks predicts a wide range of important personal developments, including at least some part of one's success or failure in any complex profession, one's personal income, and various health-related outcomes, including longevity (Deary, Batty, & Gottfredson, 2005; Gottfredson & Deary, 2004): Better performers on standardized IQ tests, whatever they measure, are more successful across a wide range of domains and live longer.

The best-known compilations of studies of results of intelligence tests from different nations and ethnic groups were collected by Lynn and Vanhanen (2002, 2006). There is an ongoing debate on the question of what the national IQs in the publications by these authors measure: genetically determined mental skills, acquired mental skills, acquired school knowledge, or a combination of some or all of these. The debate is outside the scope of this book.

Closely related to measures of national IQs, both statistically and conceptually, are measures of national achievement in a wide range of school subjects, especially in mathematics, but also in science and reading. Measures of such achievement are regularly provided by two large international projects: TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) and OECD PISA (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Programme for International Student Assessment). The data from the most recent TIMSS studies can be viewed in Mullis, Martin, and Foy (2005, 2007). OECD PISA (2003) provides similar data. One important difference is that TIMSS compares same-grade students from various countries, whereas OECD PISA compares same-age students.

Studying the national differences in IQ and what TIMSS and OECD PISA measure is important because these indicators are strongly correlated with national religiousness and various cultural values (Minkov, 2007, 2011), suicide rates (Voracek, 2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2009), as well as adolescent fertility, HIV, and murder rates (Minkov, 2011), to name just a few variables. Despite the theoretical controversies surrounding what IQ tests measure and whether they are meaningful within different cultural contexts, the implications of a nation’s average score on IQ tests, or in TIMSS and OECD PISA rankings, are quite uncontroversial.

#### 3.2.3.2. *Perception Characteristics*

Cross-cultural differences in perception characteristics have been measured by giving the study participants visual perception tasks of very different natures. Studies in this field have compared color perception (Franklin, Clifford, Williamson, & Davies, 2005), perception of emotions (Masuda et al., 2008), context-dependent versus context-independent perception (Kitayama, Duffy, Kawamura, & Larsen, 2003; Miyamoto, Nisbett, & Masuda,

2006), susceptibility to optical illusions (Segall, Campbell, & Herskovits, 1963), and so forth. As many of these studies have evidenced cross-cultural differences in perception, Nisbett and Miyamoto (2005) argued that perception should not be regarded as consisting of processes that are universal across all people at all times.

#### 3.2.4. *COGNITIVE PATTERNS*

There are cross-cultural studies in which the participants are asked to classify objects on the basis of perceived similarities between them. These are not necessarily studies of intelligence because they do not involve a right or wrong answer. They are also different from the studies of visual perception characteristics because they involve conscious decision making: The participants in the experiment are asked to use logical reasoning on the basis of subjectively chosen criteria. Studies of this type can reveal cultural differences in cognitive patterns.<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately, there are no large-scale cross-cultural studies using similar methods.

#### 3.2.5. *OBSERVABLE BEHAVIORS*

There are many measurable observable behaviors that can be studied for the purpose of cross-cultural analysis. There are two main ways to obtain data for such studies: direct observations and national statistics.

##### 3.2.5.1. *Direct Observation of Behaviors*

Probably the best-known large cross-cultural studies involving direct observation of behaviors are those by Levine and Norenzayan (1999) and Levine, Norenzayan, and Philbrick (2001), described in 9.6. and 9.7. In those studies, the researchers observed the behaviors of people in public places in different cities around the

world and recorded their observations. The national differences in the results from studies of this type can be expressed as percentages of people who have engaged in a particular behavior.

### 3.2.5.2. *National Statistics*

There are vast databases maintained by large international organizations, such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the World Health Organization, that provide many national statistics, reflecting various behaviors: murder rates, suicide rates, adolescent fertility, road death tolls, consumption of cigarettes and alcohol, and many more. Since these often correlate significantly with measures of other elements of culture, for example, values, norms, beliefs, or mental skills and knowledge, they are an invaluable source of information to the student of cross-cultural differences.

Parker (1997) collected a vast amount of national statistics, including mineral, marine, and land resources, and stated that “across all areas of the book the statistics provided should be seen as an initial attempt to describe national cultures along comparable and quantifiable dimensions” (p. vii). It is unlikely that many cross-cultural experts would see all these statistics as cultural variables. National statistics should be viewed as indications of cultural traits when they unmistakably measure human behaviors, such as murder, suicide, reckless driving and its consequences, or consumption of tobacco and alcohol. Marine resources, land resources, or climate need not be viewed as part of culture, although they may have an influence on it.

### 3.2.6. *STATISTICAL PRODUCTS*

Important knowledge about cultural differences can be obtained not only by measuring the previously discussed elements of culture but also by means of analyzing various statistical products, such as

correlations between variables, standard deviations, response style indices, quality of response indices, and more. These products might not be viewed as reflecting elements of culture but, for instance, as relationships between such elements. Whatever conceptualization we prefer, it is evident that something can be learned about cultural differences by comparing statistical products.

Hofstede (2001) used the correlation across individuals within 18 countries between their satisfaction with work goals and their overall satisfaction in the company as a psychological measure. He considered the rank correlation between this measure and the average rating of the importance of work goals as an indicator of work centrality (pp. 291–292).

Section 9.10. describes a study by Schimmack, Oishi, and Diener (2002) in which one of the key variables is actually a correlation between two variables. It reflects the degree to which frequencies of pleasant emotions are correlated with frequencies of unpleasant emotions within 38 nations. The strength of the correlation represents a national measure of the emotional dialecticism observed in each of those nations.

Smith (2004a, 2011) showed that measures of response style could correlate with reported dimensions of national culture. In that sense, those measures of response style can be considered cultural indices.

Au (2000) calculated intracultural variations within 42 countries in the World Values Survey and showed that a factor analysis of these variations revealed cultural differences.

Minkov (2009b) used Pew Research Center data to calculate a national social polarization index that reflects the degree to which respondents within the same country exhibit polarization in their answers to questions about important social issues. The index is closely correlated with measures of national culture derived from values (see 9.23.). Also, Minkov (2011) showed that the national



standard deviations reported in the Big Five personality study by Schmitt et al. (2007) are highly and positively correlated with World Values Survey measures of life satisfaction.<sup>19</sup> National standard deviations in other studies may or may not replicate this finding but they are potential indices of dimensions of national culture.

### 3.2.7. WHAT ELSE CAN BE STUDIED BY CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSTS?

This list of what cross-cultural researchers can study in order to understand cross-cultural differences is not exhaustive and the classification proposed here is not the only one possible. There are many other variables of interest. Some of them are interesting because they correlate with cultural measures, although they are not elements of culture per se. Examples are climate and prevalence of various pathogens (pathogenic microorganisms and parasites). There are also variables that may be considered elements of culture, reflections of culture, or neither of the two. Some of the examples that come to mind are HIV rates and national wealth.

## ♦ *Notes*

1. Maseland and van Hoorn (2009) attempted to discredit the use of what they called “value surveys” using data from Project GLOBE according to which measures of values seem to be negative predictors of practices. Those authors reasoned that if this is so, questions about values elicit what they call “marginal preferences,” not values. This conclusion is based on a confusion of terms and concepts. GLOBE did not measure either personal values or actual practices but ideologies and subjective stereotypes (see 3.2.1.1., 3.2.1.2., and 3.2.2.3.); therefore, their data have no implication for the utility of measuring personal values. Hofstede’s (1980, 2001) value-based dimensions have been used countless times to predict various behaviors

at the ecological level. Minkov (2011) shows that his value-based dimensions of national culture have strong predictive properties with respect to speed of economic growth, national educational achievement, suicide rates, and many other objective indicators.

2. Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz, and Knafo (2002) attempted to provide various theoretical distinctions between values and personality traits. Yet, none of their distinctions are categorical.

Perhaps the clearest and most useful of their contrasts is one that is close to an operationalist distinction, implying how traits and values should be measured: Traits describe what people are like, whereas values refer to what people consider important. Yet, consider the following real situation. The 2005–2008 wave of the World Values Survey has a series of 10 items (v80 through v89), using the following format: “Now I will briefly describe some people. Using this card, would you please indicate for each description whether that person is very much like you, like you, somewhat like you, not like you, or not at all like you? (Code one answer for each description).” As an example, let us consider the description of item v84: “It is important to this person to help the people nearby.” The possible answers are

1. Very much like me
2. Like me
3. Somewhat like me
4. A little like me
5. Not like me
6. Not at all like me

If a woman tells us that she is very much like somebody to whom it is important to help the people nearby, what does that reveal? What she is like or what she considers important? Is it one of her personality traits (a tendency to show a consistent pattern of feelings such as compassion, benevolence, etc.) or one of her values (a guiding principle in her life)?

3. Schwartz favors the development of alternative measures of values that do not depend on aggregation of individual responses,

and suggests studying proverbs, laws, and popular books. In 3.1., I discussed how confusing it might be to analyze proverbs for the study of culture. The same applies to laws: They may have been borrowed from foreign societies or even imposed by them, while strongly clashing with the spirit of the local culture. And, at this stage of our knowledge, it is unclear how exactly popular books can be studied with the methods of positivist science so that they yield statistical information for cross-cultural comparisons. To name just one problem, a book that is popular in one country may be unheard of in another.

4. I vividly remember the first large pro-democracy rally in Bulgaria right after the fall of the totalitarian regime in November 1989. Some 50,000 people gathered in Sofia and listened to several speakers who described the personal freedoms that everybody could expect from that time on. The crowd cheered approvingly every 15 seconds. Then, the next speaker brought up the plight of the ethnic Turks whose Muslim names had been replaced with Bulgarian ones by the previous regime. He said that now the Turks would be free to call themselves what they wished. The loud cheers suddenly turned into deafening boos. What the crowd wanted was “democracy for myself, totalitarianism for the Turks.” In 1.4.4., an apparently similar situation is described: the democracy paradox in the Arab world and Pakistan. It appears that large segments of the populations of some of those countries are not ready at this stage to share with everybody the democracy that they want for themselves.

5. The earliest evidence of distinction between values and norms and ideologies, albeit in a different terminology, was provided by Hofstede (1980, 2001). He distinguished between “values as the desired” (personally embraced values) versus “values as the desirable” (norms and ideologies that one may or may not endorse personally but would like to have others follow). Although Hofstede used the term “values” in both cases, he stressed the point that these are potentially very different phenomena.

Some theoreticians concurred with Hofstede. In a treatise on the desired versus the desirable, in Hofstede’s sense of the terms, Varga

(2009) indicated that the two have been seen as opposites. While the desired is personal and in a sense true, the desirable may be “cynical hypocrisy” (p. 131). Varga proposes a distinction between the “desirable” and the “desired” that very much approximates the difference between norms and personal values proposed in this book: “The desirable simply brings in the *norm*, while the desired captures *human wishes, independently of their correspondence to or deviation from the norm*” (p. 132).

Unfortunately, while some researchers have understood Hofstede’s desired-versus-desirable distinction, many others have not. The issue has been muddled further by the fact that Schwartz defines personal values as “desirable” goals. He does not confuse what this book calls “(personal) values” with what it calls “norms” and “ideologies” either conceptually or operationally, but his choice of words may lead to such confusions by others who have read both Schwartz and Hofstede. The newly proposed terminology—“values” versus “ideologies” or “norms”—may set the record straight and avoid any further misunderstandings.

Hofstede (2001) also indicated that the term “norm” is used in different ways. One is the deontological or prescriptive sense that is endorsed in this book for the concept of norms and ideologies: These are what individuals say that people in general should do or be. But “norm” is often popularly used in the sense of a prevalent practice, as in “Rudeness in this company is the norm.” This does not mean that anybody expects rudeness from the employees; it reflects a perception of a commonly observed behavior. To avoid confusion in the academic literature, one can use phrases like “common practice” or “common behavior” in this case.

6. Because one of the items used by Hofstede asked the respondents if it was acceptable to break company rules, uncertainty avoidance is often mistakenly viewed as a measure of personal rule orientation: the degree to which people in a particular society value respect for company rules as a personal principle of behavior. GLOBE authors Sully de Luque and Javidan (2004) quote French scholar d’Iribarne as indicating that although (according to Hofstede’s uncertainty avoidance

measure) French people profess a higher rule orientation than Americans, the real situation is the opposite. They also quote Schramm-Nielsen, who, “contrary to expectations” (p. 627), found that French respondents did not report that they refrain from bending or breaking company rules, whereas the Danish respondents were more likely to actually obey the rules.

In fact, the rule orientation item in Hofstede’s (1980, 2001) work is about people’s ideology for others: how rule oriented those others should be. It does not say anything about the respondents’ own rule orientation because it does not ask them what is important to them in their own lives. When this is properly understood, uncertainty avoidance can be expected to predict differences in the number or strictness of the rules that powers-that-be attempt to impose on their followers, but not at all whether people in different societies will actually embrace these rules. Further, whether a rule will be followed or not depends on its nature; this has nothing to do with Hofstede’s uncertainty avoidance.

7. Across nations, the correlation between religion as a personal value and religious faith as a desirable value for children exceeds .90\*\* in the different World Values Survey studies, whereas the correlation between importance of leisure as a personal value and importance of hard work as a value for children approximates  $-.60^{**}$ .

8. Other concepts of attitudes are also found in the literature. For example, Rokeach (1968) proposed that “an attitude is thus a package of beliefs consisting of interconnected assertions to the effect that certain things about a specific object or situation are true or false and other things about it are desirable or undesirable” (p. 16). This diffuse definition cannot be used to distinguish what this book calls attitudes (“I like hardworking people”) from what it calls beliefs (“I believe/agree that most people are hardworking”) and what it calls ideologies or norms (“People should work hard”).

Rokeach’s more detailed—yet purely theoretical—explanations also fail to distinguish well between values and attitudes: “Finally,

a value, unlike an attitude, is a standard or yardstick to guide actions” (p. 16). It is not clear why a package of beliefs to the effect that something is undesirable (an attitude, according to Rokeach) cannot guide an action. If I believe that eating red meat is undesirable (for people in general, including myself) because it is unhealthy, I may have a negative attitude toward it and refrain from consuming it.

9. Personality and culture may be conceptualized as different phenomena, but their operationalizations are statistically correlated. An association between the two was sought in the 1950s by Inkeles and Levinson (1954/1969), and by Parsons et al. (1951/2001), who stated that “with the institutionalization of culture patterns in the social structure, the threefold reciprocal integration of personality, social system, and culture comes full circle” (p. 26). This association was not demonstrated empirically, however, until Hofstede and McCrae (2004) showed high correlations between cultural dimensions and personality traits aggregated to the national level.

10. If we accept this definition, some statements by 18th-century English philosopher David Hume (1742/1964) might be good examples of stereotypes: “The Chinese have the greatest uniformity of character imaginable” (p. 249) and “The English, of any people in the universe, have the least of a national character; unless this very singularity may pass for such” (p. 252).

11. Also, Allik et al. (2011) showed that the stereotypes concerning the existence of a special and unique “Russian soul” do not correspond to any reality. These stereotypes are propagated by Russian and foreign observers (mostly authors of literary fiction) who are supposedly knowledgeable about Russian culture and psychology, yet they are unsupported by evidence.

12. The highest percentages of respondents who report a lot of respect for human rights in their countries (results for the 1994–2003 period but mostly from 1997–2001) are in Vietnam (61.9%). With its 32.2% of respondents choosing the same answer, China surpasses Luxemburg (30.0%), Canada (28.7%),

Ireland (25.8%), the United States (16.5%), the United Kingdom (16.1%), Austria (15.1%), and France (8.1%). The Philippines and Tanzania also score higher than much of the Western world: 37.8% and 36.2%, respectively. Interestingly, there are enormous discrepancies between some countries with very similar cultures and political regimes: 45.5% in Denmark versus 13.6% in Sweden. Because the item asks the respondents to describe something that they cannot judge adequately, it produces a confusing picture.

13. Heine, Lehman, Peng, and Greenholtz (2002) explicitly stated a belief in stereotypes as valid measures of national culture and personality. They criticized Schwartz's dimensions for failing to conform to popular stereotypes. In their view, it is illogical that East Germany should have the third-highest score out of 38 countries on Schwartz's affective autonomy scale, defined by the values "enjoying life," "pleasure," "exciting life," and "varied life," whereas Italy is the second lowest. Similarly, it seems strange that Chinese respondents endorse the value of "independence," and other values associated with it, more than any other culture in the world. Heine et al. openly stated that Schwartz's findings "differ from some commonly held stereotypes of these countries" (p. 907), suggesting that this makes them implausible. However, they do not provide evidence that the commonly held stereotypes are more valid than Schwartz's measures. In fact, Green, Deschamps, and Paez (2005) found that among 20 nations in Asia, Europe, South and North America, and the Middle East, the Chinese respondents had the highest score on "self-reliance" (see 9.19.), which can be viewed as a form of independence. Schwartz's findings for China do not seem implausible.

14. The following examples are from Minkov (2011). According to World Values Survey data, only 28.7% of American respondents considered thrift an important value for their children in 1990. Thrift was clearly not a very prominent American value at that time, at least not "in the abstract" as Haviland put it. "Hard work" was selected by 48.5%, a very low figure by international

standards. Independence for children was chosen by 52.3% of Americans, a somewhat more respectable figure, yet low from an international perspective. Independence was selected by 64.5% of Japanese, 69.7% of Hungarians, 70.8% of Germans, 81.2% of Danes, and 84% of Chinese.

15. For the need to establish agreement, see Peterson and Castro (2006, p. 515).

16. The whole debate on stereotypes as valid or invalid indicators of cross-cultural differences started after the publication of Project GLOBE's main book (House et al., 2004), and some of the issues associated with it began to take clear shape only after publication of the article by McCrae, Terracciano, Realo, and Allik (2008), showing that some of GLOBE's "as-is" dimensions reflect national stereotypes that do not correspond much to reality.

17. Some examples of tasks that can be given in an IQ test are

Rotation: The respondent is asked to predict how a pictured object would look if rotated in space at a particular angle.

Picture completion: The respondent is asked to fill a gap in a picture with an appropriate element.

Series of numbers or objects: The respondent is asked to predict the next logical number or object in a series such as 1, 3, 5, 7, \_\_\_\_?

Relationships between words denoting objects: Sock to foot is the same as glove to \_\_\_\_?

Scrambled letters: The respondent is given a sequence of scrambled letters (such as FPERTCE) and asked to form a meaningful word with them (PERFECT).

18. For example, Uskul, Kitayama, and Nisbett (2008) gave Turkish farmers, herders, and fishermen pictures of various objects and asked them to group them on the basis of the similarities that they perceived. They found that

herders were more likely to form a glove-scarf pair than a glove-hand pair because the criterion that they relied on was that a glove and a scarf are both clothing items. Farmers more often classified the glove together with the hand. The criterion that they used was functionality.

19. Low national standard deviations in self-reported personality traits suggest cultural conformity. One of the effects of this pressure for conformity seems to be a lower life satisfaction (Minkov, 2011).