

PART I

Cultural Values

What is meant by the word *culture*? There is no easy answer. In 1952, Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn published a list of 160 different definitions of the word: We could define culture from a historical perspective, that is, the traditions that are passed on to future generations; we could define culture from a behavioral perspective, that is, the learned, shared ways of behaving in life; we could define culture from a symbolic perspective, that is, the arbitrarily assigned meanings that are shared by a society. We could also define culture from a structural perspective, that is, patterns and interrelated ideas, symbols, or behaviors. Finally, we could define culture from a normative perspective, that is, the ideals, values, and rules for living.

From all these perspectives, we acknowledge culture to be learned rather than biologically inherited and to involve arbitrarily assigned, symbolic meanings. Human ability to assign arbitrary meanings is what, at base, distinguishes one culture from another. The readings in this first section address culture from structural and normative perspectives to examine the values that guide behavior within a cultural group.

Claude Lévi-Strauss was born in 1908 in Belgium and studied at the University of Paris. For a time in the 1930s, he was a professor at the University of Sao Paulo, making several expeditions into central Brazil. His belief that

the characteristics of humans are everywhere identical was found after countless visits to North and South American Indian tribes. The method he used to study the social organization of these tribes is called *structuralism*, which he defined as "the search for unsuspected harmonies." Lévi-Strauss derived structuralism from a school of linguistics whose focus was not on the meaning of the word but the patterns that the words form. He is also known for his structural analysis of mythology. He was interested in explaining why myths around the world seem so similar. Perhaps he was most recognized for his refusal to see Western civilization as privileged and unique and for his insistence that the savage mind is equal to the civilized mind. This reader begins with excerpts from Lévi-Strauss's writings as a voice for cultural diversity.

Geert Hofstede was born in 1928 at Haarlem, the Netherlands. His formal education included an internship as an assistant ship's engineer on a voyage to Indonesia. He founded and managed the Personnel Research Department of IBM Europe. Later he was co-founder and first director of IRIC, the Institute for Research on Intercultural Cooperation in the Netherlands, and professor of organizational anthropology and international management at Maastricht University, also in the Netherlands. Hofstede was partly responsible for IBM's International Employee Opinion

Research Programme. Over a 6-year period, he and his colleagues collected and analyzed more than 100,000 questionnaires completed by matched groups of IBM employees in 72 countries around the world. The influence of his work is evidenced by his being the most cited non-American in the field of management in the U.S. Social Science Citation Index. In the reading "Business Cultures," Hofstede briefly describes what we commonly refer to as *Hofstede's cultural dimensions*.

Hofstede's dimensions have become the basis of extensive research projects. In "Human Factors on the Flight Deck: The Influence of National Culture," Ashleigh C. Merritt and Robert L. Helmreich used Hofstede's dimensions to study group processes among pilots and flight attendants working on national airlines.

Cultural values permeate all aspects of culture, and we frequently study them when we examine how conflicts within a culture develop and evolve. In "Conflict Management in Thai Organizations," Rujira Rojjanaprayon and his graduate students Porntipha Chiemprapha and Achaya Kanchanakul explore the characteristics of conflict management within the context of Thai cultural values. And in

"An Examination of Taoist and Buddhist Perspectives on Interpersonal Conflicts, Emotions, and Adversities," Rueyling Chuang explores Taoist and Buddhist teachings as basis for fundamental Asian cultural values. And finally, in a well done and extensive study, Jung-huei Becky Yeh and Ling Chen examine value orientations, behavioral variations to arguing, and perceptions of being argumentative in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and mainland China.

Jonathan J. H. Zhu and Zhou He report the results of a study of adult Internet users in Beijing and Guangzhou and value orientations of Communism, materialism, and postmaterialism.

In 1831, the 26-year-old aristocrat Alexis de Tocqueville toured the U.S. His pioneering ethnographic work *Democracy in America* continues to enlighten readers with its insights into U.S. cultural values. His work is an example of *etic knowledge*, that is, theoretical and normative information about a culture learned by an outsider. In the final reading in this section, M. Gene Aldridge offers his individual and personal insight in understanding contemporary U.S. His observations are an example of *emic knowledge*, that is, what is learned about a culture from an insider.