NEW DIRECTIONS FOR CROSS- CULTURAL STUDIES: LINKING ORGANIZATIONAL AND SOCIETAL CULTURES

Cathy A. Enz

Indiana University

INTRODUCTION

What does culture mean in cross-cultural studies? Much of the comparative management literature has adopted vague and atheoretical approaches to conceptualizing and measuring culture. It is no wonder that the literature has yielded little cumulative knowledge about management in different cultures (Miller, 1984; Kelley & Worthley, 1981; Negandhi, 1983). While many explanations can be offered for the lack of consistency and clarity in comparative studies, one explanation is the nature of the societal culture and the degree to which individual organizational cultures reflect or conflict with the overarching societal culture. The degree of societal heterogeneity and the congruence or fit between societal and organizational cultures will be examined in this paper in an attempt to offer suggestions for future cross-cultural research.

Societal cultures are likely to vary in the degree to which they have a dominant set of values and beliefs. One way of examining cultural diversity within any society is to identify the nation on a continuum ranging from homogeneous to heterogeneous. In a homogeneous societal culture the underlying values and beliefs are shared and pervasive; thus a dominant set of cultural beliefs exist. In a more heterogeneous societal culture many different values and beliefs are held by diverse population groups. This situation is characterized by a multicultural society.

Observing that some societies may be monocultural while others are multicultural, it follows that organizational cultures within these societies will reflect the societal homogeneity-heterogeneity. In heterogeneous nations organizational diversity will flourish. Nations that are industrialized, urban, open to immigration, and politically stable are more likely to be heterogeneous. Nations that are heterogeneous, but politically unstable, are excluded from the present investigation. Hence, the focus of this paper is on heterogeneous societies which "hang together" or successfully operate under the condition of cultural diversity. Examples of such nations would include the United States, Switzerland, and Belgium.

In contrast, nations that are characterized by pervasive government ownership and control of business, reliance on rural or agrarian economies, or centrally planned economies are likely to be culturally homogeneous. In a more homogeneous societal culture, organizational cultural diversity will be constrained, and a much tighter fit will exist between social and organizational culture. Deviant organizations (those that dramatically differ from the societal culture) are likely to be ostracized or possibly forced to conform to the dominant values and beliefs.

Examining societal homogeneity-heterogeneity is essential if attempts at cross-cultural comparisons are to prove useful. Reliance on abstract overgeneralization of a societal culture may lead to distortion in drawing conclusions regarding comparative management. For example, in the United States attempts to capture the American culture by identifying a typical American firm would be useless. The United States has a heterogeneous societal culture and, as a result, remarkably different organizational cultures. Heterogeneous societies are frequently compared with homogeneous ones, suggesting that the findings of many cross-national studies are meaningless in capturing a cultural component.

In heterogeneous societal cultures, the organizational culture is more likely to predict and explain organizational functioning and behavior because it more directly guides behavior. In contrast, the organizational culture in a homogeneous society is likely to reflect the societal culture. Therefore, congruence or fit between organizational and social culture is strong, and examining societal culture may prove to be as useful for explaining organizational life as considering the organizational culture. The organization is merely a passive carrier of the broader culture in a homogeneous society.

Clearly, comparing organizations in heterogeneous and homogeneous societal cultures is problematic, as are studies comparing organizations in two heterogeneous societal cultures. Alternate research approaches which address the degree of cultural diversity would be advised. Concentrating on refining the definitions and conceptualizations of societal and organizational culture and measuring heterogeneity are important first steps. Directing research to comparisons among homogeneous societal cultures and organizational cultures within heterogeneous societies may also yield exciting comparative management opportunities.

In this paper the concepts of societal and organizational culture will be explored. The focus is on the informal realm of the firm rather than on the components of the manufacturing process or technology, which may be "culturally neutral" and thus more readily transferred from one society to another. Using the distinction between homogeneous and heterogeneous societal cultures, several propositions will be suggested as precursors to research. The paper concludes with a discussion of possible research directions and opportunities for cross-cultural studies, including studies within heterogeneous societies. Given the embedded cultures within many industrialized societies, several comparative research questions can be explored easily by looking within a particular nation for organizational and management similarities and differences. The influence of any particular organization's culture on the actions of workers depends to a large degree on the nature of the overarching society.

SOCIETAL CULTURE DEFINED

While many have bemoaned the definitional complexity of the concept of culture, most researchers in cross-cultural studies have proceeded by ignoring the question of definition. One review noted that of the 22 studies examined, only 2 offered a definition of culture (Ajiferuke & Boddewyn, 1970). Reviews of the cross-cultural literature have explicitly criticized the tendency for researchers to assume that culture and nation-state are conceptually similar (Child, 1981; Bhagat & McQuaid, 1982; Alder, 1983). These writers suggest that intellectual laziness and resistance to theoretical development are contributing factors to the lack of distinction drawn between culture and nation. Because culture is used in the comparative literature as either a synonym for nation or simply as a residual variable covering all those factors the other variables have not considered, studies which conclude that culture makes a difference and conflicting studies which indicate that organizational activities are culture-free cannot be reconciled. [i]

The early anthropological literature that focused on primitive societies used the term culture to refer to every aspect of a given society, much like the cross-cultural researchers today. Over the years, the term has acquired multiple definitions in use by scholars in numerous disciplines, as the previous article in this volume illustrates (Nath, 1986). Several sociologists, anthropologists and organizational theorists have narrowed the definition and drawn distinctions between the content of culture (shared understandings) and the products of culture (artifacts or substance) (Enz, 1985; Sathe, 1983; Trice & Beyer, 1984).

Bhagat and McQuaid (1982) advocate the use of the term subjective culture, first suggested by Triandis and associates (1972), as an alternative to using culture as synonymous with nation. These authors introduce the term subjective culture to refer to the aspects of culture which relate to belief systems, roles, norms, and attitudes as distinct from the language, climate, or environmental factors. Child (1981) also provides an approach to culture which stresses the content of culture or value component (preference states) in a society. "The collective programming of the mind" is the phrase used by Hofstede (1984) to describe culture. What these authors offer is a view of culture that stresses shared ways of thinking or values. In addition, they attempt to separate environment from culture, while acknowledging that a strong interaction exists between the two.

Like Child and Hofstede, the approach to societal culture proposed here is one that concentrates on the cultural content or the set of shared values and the symbolic representations of shared meanings. Geertz (1973, p. 89), a leading cultural anthropologist, argues that societal culture "denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life." The key factors in this orientation to culture include the shared nature of understandings that persist over time and are learned.

Talcott Parsons (1967) developed a general theory of social organization around the importance of cultural values. According to this sociologist, cultural values determine the shaping of social systems. Values are learned and provide the basis for defining and making sense of social structures. Parsons (1967) and Kluckhohn (1967) observe that values have three components: the cognitive, the emotional, and the evaluative. Hence, the possession of values suggests that individuals think about what they believe in, have emotional attachments to these beliefs, and determine

desirability from among a group of different beliefs. Attention to strictly cognitive aspects of management practice means one loses sight of culturally derived emotions and judgments.

Through the process of social interaction, patterns of meaning are developed and passed on to others. What makes a societal culture is the development of shared ideas or understandings that inform behavior in the context of the particular society. Thus, shared meanings are the understandings that lie behind and inform the everyday behaviors of a group of people. These hidden rules, preference states, and unconscious codes are shared, taken for granted, and assumed to be given; thus, they become universal for the whole of a society. Values are sustained over time but can also be changed; therefore, culture cannot be viewed as static or permanent.

Homogeneous Societal Cultures

Many nations of the world are filled with a relatively homogeneous population. A homogeneous societal culture is one in which the shared meanings are similar and little variation in beliefs exist; that is, the culture has one dominant way of thinking and acting. Diversity exists in all nations, but the critical factor is degree of variation in the shared meanings within the society. For homogeneous societies the degree of consensus is strong.

In many societies the strength of the dominant values is due in part to the presence of a power elite who have homogeneity of beliefs. In these countries, other groups within the society may hold different values but they will confer on the elites the right to control institutions or will be helpless in changing the status quo. Thus value sharing may not be universal, but the decision makers and leaders are unified and allowed to dominate. Over time, the dominant groups institutionalize their values, and the entire political and legal environment reflects these values. As an example, the white minority in South Africa controls both government and organizations, and can subsequently force restrictions such as the apartheid policy. In this society, the dominant values and beliefs represented in the political, economic and business contexts are those of a minority who currently control and shape organizational functioning.

In homogeneous nations, a more integrated set of beliefs guides behavior. Variation from the set of beliefs is regarded as deviant and not simply different. Some examples of nations with cultural homogeneity may include Saudi Arabia, China, and Japan.[ii] Societies are infused with meanings which guide behavior. In addition, the meanings are symbolically represented in the economic and legal systems. These systems are enduring and thus have an impact on how business is done in a particular nation. In the case of a homogeneous societal culture, the legal and economic system will reflect the dominant way of thinking and will typically change slowly.

Heterogeneous Societal Cultures

A heterogeneous societal culture is one in which numerous population groups have specific and distinct values and understandings. In a heterogeneous society many sets of shared meanings make up the society. These shared assumptions are common to some groups but markedly different from the understandings of other groups. This characterization of a society suggests that multiple cultures coexist. A dominant societal culture exists in heterogeneous societies as well as homogeneous societies. The difference is that this dominant set of values is not regarded as the only acceptable set of beliefs and thus much greater variation from this set of beliefs exists and is encouraged within the heterogeneous society.

Time magazine, in a recent special issue, highlighted the impact of heterogeneity by presenting articles on the new immigrants in the United States. This approach to diversity focused on ancestry as the basis for heterogeneity. As one article noted (Greenwald, 1985, p. 72), 'What country is this?' Many bemused Americans might ask that question as they go about their work and play. ... Americans are increasingly finding that entire businesses have acquired a foreign-born flavor."

Another way of characterizing the presence of heterogeneity is suggested by Joel Garreau (1981), who argues that North America can be divided into nine distinct cultures representing different regions. His book suggests that national boundaries are meaningless and that nine different nations exist within North America. Mexamerica, Breadbasket, Ecotopia, The Empty Quarter, Quebec, New England, The Foundry, Dixie, and The Islands are the labels he attaches to these nine different cultures.

Several industrialized countries may fall under the category of being relatively more heterogeneous in their culture than other countries. Examples of heterogeneous societal cultures may include Canada and Australia, as well as those mentioned in the introduction of this chapter. Given the degree of cultural diversity in heterogeneous nations,

one would expect that the legal and political systems would reflect the diversity, and comparatively greater and more frequent changes in these institutions would exist.

The importance placed on the word relative is critical both for development of the concept and future research. Comparative studies is an area where the degree of cultural consensus and variation from this normative set of preferences is meaningful, if not critical, to research.

Heterogeneous vs. Homogeneous Cultures

Many cross-cultural researchers have acknowledged in discussion portions of their manuscripts that the particular organization they studied is not typical or representative of the societal culture. This observation reflects the possibility that a single societal culture does not exist in the country studied. The cultural component in these studies may be the unique organizational culture or the beliefs of the organization's leadership. Hence, the cultural facets of many cross-cultural studies may be more usefully captured by examining the influence of the organizational culture on the behavior of workers.

Selecting an organization and then identifying it as representative of a particular nation is a dangerous generalization for studies of heterogeneous societies. The tendency in comparative cross-cultural research to assume that a culture is homogeneous raises serious doubt as to the replicability of many research findings. Thus an important aspect of cross-cultural research is diagnosing the degree to which the society is homogeneous or heterogeneous and what the distinguishing variables should be.

To identify various nations on a homogeneity-heterogeneity continuum would be an important addition to the theoretical literature in cross-cultural studies. One opportunity for future research would be to develop important values or beliefs to use in positioning a nation on the continuum. The development of critical value orientations would be particularly useful if the classification system stressed values which directly have an impact on business-related issues.

Providing a classification system to specify which cultural components determine homogeneity or heterogeneity is not the purpose of the present paper. Understandably, the development of a scheme to determine homogeneity and heterogeneity is neither straightforward nor easy to conceive. It is possible that even within homogeneous societal cultures some members of the population will disagree on the cultural meanings and values. It is very unlikely however, that the degree of diversity and difference on cultural meanings would be more evident in homogeneous than in heterogeneous societies.

THE ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

While many different schools of thought and approaches to studying organizations exist, there is agreement that organizations are distinct from the society, the environment, and the individual. At the same time we know that organizations influence and are influenced by the society, the environment and the individual. It is evident that organizations are influenced by numerous internal and external factors, but it makes sense in any discussion of comparative management to specifically address those aspects of management that are uniquely organizational.

One component of organizations is the informal system of shared meanings and values which are indigenous to the organization. This aspect of organizational life has been called organizational culture. Numerous definitions of organizational culture exist, but most correspond with the definition used by Schein (1985). Schein sees organizational culture as "the deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization, that operate unconsciously, and that define in a basic 'taken-for-granted' fashion an organization's view of itself and its environment" (1985, p. 6).

As this definition suggests, the concept of organizational versus societal culture differs with respect to the level of cultural analysis and the content of culture itself. In recent years, organizational researchers have redirected attention away from the structural aspects of organization and more toward the informal, implicit shared meanings (Ouchi & Wilkins, 1985). The popularity of books such as Peters and Waterman's In Search of Excellence and Deal and Kennedy's Corporate Cultures exemplify a recognition that the rational and universal aspects of organizational functioning are inadequate to explain all of what happens in organizations. Both the American business community and academics are now acknowledging the importance of shared assumptions or meanings in determining behavior and possibly success in an organization. These books, as well as the academic literature, appear to suggest that shared meanings or values guide

behavior in organizations (Enz, 1985; 1986). This recognition of the importance of the organizational culture offers the possibility that a specific business culture may influence behavior to a much greater degree than the societal culture.

Organizations do not operate in a vacuum, but rather in a societal context. The labels "homogeneous" and "heterogeneous societal culture" were used to designate the degree to which diversity of values and beliefs pervade a society. Because of the interplay of social and organizational culture, closer attention must be paid to the linkage between these different forms of culture. When cultural diversity exists in a society, it is logical that cultural diversity will also exist across organizations. In societies where a strongly held set of values prevail, organizations will be infused with these meanings and will not differ as much from each other.

In addition to the overarching societal culture, cross-cultural researchers must take into consideration the organizational culture. In heterogeneous societies the role of organizational culture becomes critical. The role of culture is particularly important when the organizational beliefs conflict with those of society. The remainder of this section is devoted to the relationship between societal and organizational cultures and the implications of the linkages on organizational functioning.

Organizational Culture in Homogeneous Societies

In a society characterized as homogeneous, it is expected that cultural similarity is widespread. Individuals in a homogeneous society will share many fundamental beliefs and values in common. In this type of society, organizations are likely to reflect the societal culture; hence, organizational cultures will not differ from each other or from the dominant societal culture.[iii] Management in this cultural context is in many respects easier than management in heterogeneous societies because the society dictates behaviors and the organization plays a passive role.

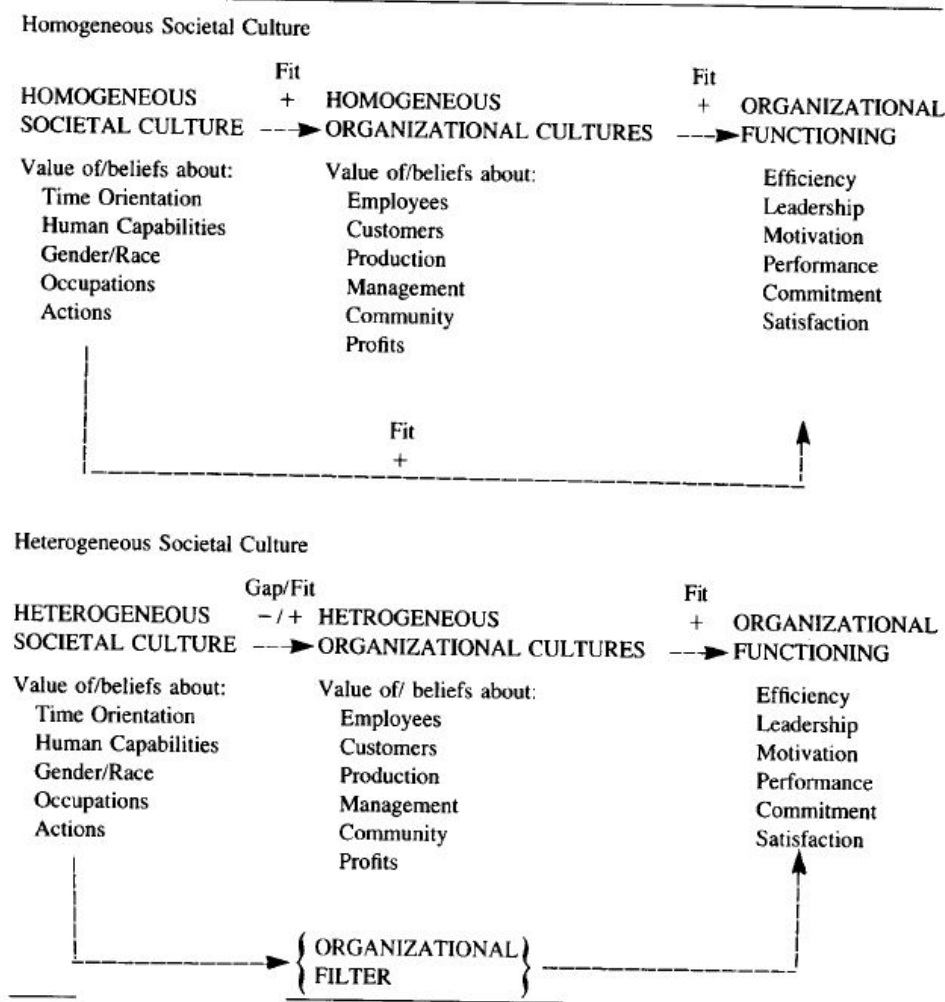*Figure 1.* Cultural fit and organizational functioning.

Figure 1 diagrams the relationship between cultural components and organizational functioning. The model presents several examples of societal and organizational beliefs and values. Also indicated are some components of organizational functioning.[iv] The relationships in the model suggest that in a homogeneous societal culture, a strong fit exists between the national culture and any particular organizational culture. In this situation both the societal culture and the organizational culture influence the organization's functioning directly. The organization and community fuse into one, with both dictating similar prescriptions and proscriptions for behavior and management in the work context.

Corporations which operate in conflict with the overall societal values are regarded as deviant in homogeneous societies. Deviant organizations are those that adopt a different set of beliefs and values, and are therefore active as opposed to passive in transmitting cultural messages. When a coherent societal culture pervades, active transmission of conflicting cultural messages by an organization are discouraged. These firms may find it more difficult to operate over time.

A recent study of Arab executives reported that in the West managers are able to separate their business and social lives, but in the Arab world these are the same (Muna, 1980). Another illustration of the linkage between society and organization can be found in Japan. Sanko Steamship company recently requested government help to avoid bankruptcy. The Japanese government, while usually paternalistic, refused to help Sanko because, "In a country where consensus is paramount, Sanko's independence wasn't appreciated" (Fortune, 1985: 10). This example suggests there is a cost for not sharing the pervasive societal beliefs in a homogeneous societal culture.

The interplay between societal and organizational culture is critical. Using a continuum of homogeneity-heterogeneity at the societal level provides the context for speculating about the linkage between societal and organizational cultures. In short:

Proposition 1.01: In a homogeneous societal culture, less organizational cultural diversity will exist.

Proposition 1.02: In a homogeneous societal culture, the similarity or fit between the organizational culture and the societal culture will be strong.

Proposition 1.03: To the extent that the organizational culture reflects the societal culture, the societal culture will directly influence organizational behavior and functioning, and the organization will play a passive role.

In essence, the overall culture in a homogeneous society more directly influences the individual at work. Organizations are not particularly distinctive and serve as passive carriers of the societal culture rather than posing a sharp contrast.

Organizational Culture in Heterogeneous Societies

Heterogeneous societal cultures are those in which individuals value different things in life and attach meanings to events that are not similar to others in their society. In these societies, it is very likely that work force diversity will influence organizational functioning. Different organizational cultures will reflect the societal variety, and distinct corporate cultures will prevail. In heterogeneous societies it is possible that the organizational culture mediates or filters the societal culture's role or at least reflects diverse societal cultures.

A study of American managers of Japanese descent revealed that ancestry did influence some aspects of management, but amount of interaction among individuals with different nationalities within the same organization decreased the significant effects of ancestry (Kelley & Ressler, 1973). When different groups are placed in the same organizational culture, they tend to adapt to the local culture and learn the new values and beliefs which will guide behavior. Another study within the United States examined the difference between Japanese and Japanese-American employees in Japanese firms in California (Lincoln et al., 1978). This study found that functional specialization was different across firms, but other aspects of structure such as centralization, formalization, and differentiation were not significantly different.

The important feature of these two studies is that they examine cultural differences within a heterogeneous society. However, the difficulty with these studies is that they do not draw a distinction between societal and organizational culture, and thus make interpretation difficult. In a heterogeneous society, national origin may play a minor role while the unique organizational culture plays a critical role. Further, the lack of cultural difference findings in studies that examine only one organization or type of organization (e.g., only banks) offers tentative support for the presence of an organizational effect

Recent discussions of Vietnamese-run businesses in Texas or Hispanic firms in Arizona indicate that these organizations have unique cultures which differ from the "dominant" American business and inform behavior within these organizations. While the evidence to support value differences among these organization types is still tentative, the presence of multiple organizational cultures is undeniable. Once again the focus should move toward the organization and away from the individual to more clearly understand the impact of culture. An individual's cultural beliefs can be altered and influenced by the social setting, making organizational context essential to an understanding of cultural differences.

Given the obvious diversity of organizational types in heterogeneous societies, it is impossible to use a single organization to represent a national culture; yet we continue to do so. We do not know if we have captured a country's culture when we examine only one organization in a heterogeneous society.[v] Focusing exclusively on ancestry or nationality is also problematic because more compelling factors may be influencing value similarity.

The model of cultural fit discussed earlier (see Figure 1) can also provide insight into the role of organizational culture in heterogeneous societies. In heterogeneous societies it is expected that a cultural gap may exist between the societal and organizational cultures. Because of societal and organizational diversity of cultural types, organizational cultures will influence worker behavior in a more direct and instrumental fashion. Organizations will take active rather than passive roles in shaping beliefs and behaviors. An enterprise is likely to filter and in some instances mediate the effects of the societal culture on organizational activities. Diverse organizational cultures will flourish and reflect the eclecticism in the broader society.

The degree to which an organizational culture determines work behaviors depends on the strength of the culture. If a company has a strong set of values for workers to adopt, the dominant societal culture may never influence the workers. Thus an organization may espouse values and meanings that are in conflict with the values of other organizations and this set of shared meanings will influence the behaviors of managers and workers. If, on the other hand, the organization has a weak culture with many different sets of values expressed by subcultures, neither the organizational nor societal culture will constructively or consistently guide behavior. Conflict, ambiguity and confusion will prevail in this situation.

Below are four propositions which are suggested for examining the linkage of cultures in heterogeneous societies.

Proposition 2.01: In a heterogeneous societal culture, organizational cultural diversity will prevail.

Proposition 2.02: In a heterogeneous societal culture, the linkage between the societal and organizational culture may be loose, conflicting, or nonexistent.

Proposition 2.03: In a heterogeneous societal culture, organizational culture will filter or mediate the societal culture, and be more important and active in determining organizational behavior and functioning.

Proposition 2.04: The stronger and more pervasive the organizational culture, the greater its influence on organizational functioning and behavior.

In summary, the diversity of organizational cultures reflects the diversity of multiple cultures within heterogeneous societies. Organizational culture can more directly and profoundly influence individual worker behaviors when the firm has a strong and pervasive set of values. The organizational values may even serve to filter or block the values of the broader societal culture, assuming the societal culture is diverse and the organizational culture is unified or strong.

Linking Cultural Types

Both societal and organizational culture are characterized by the degree of homogeneity or heterogeneity that exists. It is possible to conceive of several cultural combinations to characterize different situations. For example, if a society and different organizations are homogeneous, little variation in beliefs and values exists. Organizations are closely aligned with the overarching societal culture, and balance or fit is evident.

The implication for organizational behavior in this situation is that both the society and the organization impose values, these values are complementary, and both directly influence individuals at work. The society plays an active role in the shaping of behavior while the organization plays a passive role. Management within organizations in homogeneous societies performs a minor maintenance activity. Hence, it is likely that one of the net results of

homogeneous societal cultures is the inability of an organization to be different and thus the possibility that creativity and innovation are stifled.

Assume that the society is heterogeneous and the organization is homogeneous with respect to belief systems. In this case, the organization's culture will dominate individual actions. When many diverse and conflicting values and beliefs exist in a society, the worker will look to the clearly articulated and consistent values within the organization for guidance and direction. The greater the societal diversity, the more active and important the role of corporate culture in the life of the employee. The opportunities for management to make a difference in the work behaviors of employees are much greater in heterogeneous societies.

In the United States, recent attention has been focused on how to change corporate culture in order to elicit desired behavior from employees. Many practitioners believe that a corporate culture can be changed and that the results can be positive for organizational performance (Denison, 1983; Hickman & Silva, 1984; Kilmann, 1982; Schwartz & Davis, 1981). Increasing attention has been directed toward developing and maintaining homogeneous organizational cultures. The normative message is simple: in a heterogeneous society, organizational cultures can and must become homogeneous to maximize the success of the enterprise. Prescriptions are frequently offered specifying the nature or substance of the corporate culture in addition to the need for homogeneity. Kilmann (1984) discusses adaptive organizational cultures as being innovative, creative, risk-taking and driving in contrast to bureaucratic cultures that are cautious, power- oriented, regulated and ordered. The focus on developing specific types of homogeneous organizational cultures dominates much of what is currently written on management and corporate strategy.

Having raised the question of cultural heterogeneity and the valuable role of organizational culture in many societies, it is now essential to provide some possible suggestions for future research. In the next section, several avenues for future research will be discussed.

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH

The approach to cross-cultural research advocated in this chapter focuses first on the categorization of nations by the degree to which the societal culture is homogeneous or heterogeneous. The first step in the development of a cultural continuum is to specify the relevant variables for classifying different nations as homogeneous or heterogeneous. Development of a framework requires that the variables are not designed with only one country in mind. In essence, the creation of a continuum should be broadly conceived and focus on abstract categories of belief systems, while acknowledging that the homogeneity-heterogeneity distinction is somewhat arbitrary.

The measurement of culture should begin by focusing on beliefs and values at various levels. Measuring personal values is only one approach where the emphasis is centered on the individual (England, 1975; Rokeach, 1978). Given the impact of socialization and the tendency for individuals to conform, work values (Hofstede, 1984) and organizational values (Enz, 1986) may prove to be more critical in the examination of cultural effects. A promising area of study is to examine organizational values and the degree to which values are shared by various subgroups within an organization. Examining organizational values emphasizes the social unit rather than the individual. Developing measures which stress societal values would also fill a gap in the present literature on values. Future research would benefit from examining societal, organizational and personal values.

It has been suggested in this chapter that in heterogeneous societies, diverse organizational cultures exist. In addition, these organizational cultures directly influence the work life of organizational members. It is reasonable to suggest that cross-cultural research would be dangerously misguided if a few organizations in heterogeneous societies were compared with organizations in homogeneous societies. Comparisons of this type provide far too many opportunities for error. Thus, homogeneous societies should be compared with other homogeneous societies, when the intent of study is to examine cultural differences and similarities. Heterogeneous societies should not be compared with each other or with homogeneous societies, because it is impossible for the selected organizations to be representative of the societal culture. For example, studies should not profess to capture a representative American company for cross-cultural studies without careful qualification. Attempts to make cultural comparisons of such disparate countries as China and the United States should be done carefully, realizing that the conclusions may be superficial at best and grossly inaccurate at worst.

The linkage between societal and organizational culture does suggest many opportunities for cross-cultural research within heterogeneous societies. Many cultural types are represented in countries such as the United States. A new direction for comparative studies would be to explore the cultural variety within a single heterogeneous society. As

nations become multicultural, the possibilities exist to identify organizational culture types that transcend national boundaries but remain distinct as cultural forms. How are Hispanic-owned and operated firms in the United States different from Asian-owned and operated firms? Do firms in the Midwest function differently than firms in the Southwest? How do the values of different founders and owners influence the culture of the enterprise?

Longitudinal studies of organizations in unstable societal cultures is also an exciting area for further study. Mapping the impact that a change from a homogeneous to a heterogeneous society, or vice versa, has upon an organization has enormous implications for our understanding of management. For example, Iran appears to be moving toward a monocultural society. What are the implications of this shift on the different organizations within the country? A move from a homogeneous political and business system to a more heterogeneous political and organizational system is possible in South Africa. Why are businessmen suddenly pushing for change after decades of complacency with the white minority rule? What will happen to corporate cultures if the society becomes more heterogeneous in the political and legal arenas?

In summary, it has been suggested that societal heterogeneity dramatically influences the viability of cross-national comparisons. In homogeneous societies, the organizational culture is a passive transmitter of the overarching societal culture. Conversely, in heterogeneous societies, the organizational culture may serve as a mediator or filter of the societal culture and thus prove to be a more appropriate unit for analysis. Thus, developing a value continuum for characterizing nations as more or less homogeneous-heterogeneous provides the framework for more careful cultural comparison of organizations in different nations. Considering the frequently neglected role of organizational culture in heterogeneous societies also presents the opportunity for exploring culture within single nations.

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[i] The culture-free conclusion is frequently drawn by researchers examining organizational structure as opposed to management practices. The importance of culture is thus more likely to be observed in the informal as opposed to formal aspects of organizational functioning. However, many sociologists (Parsons & Shils, 1967; Stinchcombe, 1968) point out that cultural values inform social organization, and thus even structural issues are not without a cultural component. Lincoln, Olson and Hanada (1978) suggest rational theories of organizations are incomplete and that "slippage" exists between the formal design of organizations and the structuring of interactions. Clearly the cultural difference/cultural convergence issue remains an empirical question.

[ii] The nations selected to illustrate homogeneity are not totally homogeneous. Rather, these nations point to a greater degree of relative convergence of beliefs across the population than other countries. Homogeneous societies may also be culturally similar because of the presence of a dominant ruling elite.

[iii] The organizations referred to in this paper are viable, ongoing enterprises rather than the easy entry, quick exit company. While this qualification appears obvious, it is possible that in the short run incongruent firms will operate in homogeneous societies. The probability that they will continue to operate and thrive is significantly lower than the probability of success for culturally congruent organizations.

[iv] The development of specific value categories or areas of shared beliefs remains to be elaborated on in the future. The values presented in the model here only serve to illustrate the model and stimulate elaboration and development. Future research is necessary to provide a classification of value categories suitable for development of the model.

[v] Many cross-cultural studies examine more than one organization, but use a convenience sample which does not come close to representing the culture of the country under study. Frequently these studies are limited in their generalizability because of their size, industry, location, employee composition, and so forth.