Collective cultural mind programming: escaping from the cage

Brendan McSweeney
School of Management, Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, UK

Abstract

Purpose – Although vanquished in anthropology, the notion "national culture" as a set of unique, shared, closed, enduring, coherent, determinate subjective values has been repopularized in management by Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE), Hofstede, and Trompenaars (the Trio). The purpose of this paper is to critique the Trio's representation of culture and its purported consequences.

Design/methodology/approach – Identifies the essential similarity of the Trio's work by describing seven propositions they share. Drawing on research from multiple disciplines it critiques a number of these propositions.

Findings – The Trio's representation of culture functions as a conceptual cage which confines analysis to misleading and impoverished explanations of organizational and other social action.

Originality/value – By describing and critiquing some of the metaphorical "bars" of the Trio's emasculating "cage" it opens further the possibility of richer and relevant cultural research.

Keywords Culture, Hofstede, Trompenaars, GLOBE

Paper type Conceptual paper

> Making sense when talking about the future […] of meaning may depend on: our ability to avoid both the reification of methodological research programmes as if they were immortal and "fixed" […] and our ability to avoid anthropomorphizing of individual organizations or collective institutional contexts (Magala, 2009, p. 188).

Introduction

The claim that "national culture" shapes the behaviour of the populations of discrete national territories (countries) both within and outside of organizations (e.g. the decisions and actions of managers and consumer choices) has not only achieved, but for decades has retained, an immense following across many management sub-disciplines. At any one time from multiple candidate causalist explanations/solutions just a few – sometimes only one – achieve explain-all/cure-all status within management. But the popularity of these catchall theories is usually short-lived. Management is an arena of fads and fashions (Collins, 2003). One might therefore have expected that the attractiveness of the supposed explanatory and action enhancing power of "national culture" would also have been brief. The enduring popularity of "national culture" in management is even more surprising because by the time its "star" began to rise in that arena, its bedrock depiction of "culture" – shared subjective values which shape the actions of partitioned populations – had been abandoned in anthropology (Abu-Lughod, 1991; Bock, 1999; Breidenbach and Niyíri, 2009; Brightman, 1995). Support has been maintained across management's many sub-disciplines despite decades of constructivist theorizing, critiques of reification, and the destabilizing contributions of post-structuralist, post-modern, and other theories as well as many

Journal of Organizational Change Management
Vol. 29 No. 1, 2016
pp. 68-80

0953-4814
DOI 10.1108/JOCM-12-2015-0229

direct critiques (Brubaker, 2004). Why – unlike the fate of so many other wide-ranging management theories – does belief in "national culture" as the primary driver of social action endure?

The Trio

Research, teaching, and training which attribute extensive causal power to "national culture" rely heavily on the conceptions and descriptions of such culture by the multi-authored Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) project; Geert Hofstede; and/or Fons Trompenaars (hereafter, "the Trio"). Each offers a single source of descriptions and comparisons of the purported characteristics of nations aka countries. This "one-stop-shop" feature is an important part of the attractiveness of the Trio's model, but clearly it is an insufficient explanation. A property which distinguishes "national culture" from other contenders as a general explanation/solution is that it was widely believed, albeit in a more generalized sense, even before the emergence and promotion of Hofstede's, and subsequently the Trio's and GLOBE's, depictions. Attribution of immense causal power to unique national cultures, and often more specifically to national "values", had and has a "head-start" on other possible categorizations, for example, class or age. From our earliest years we are all bombarded with claims about the cultural uniqueness of our own country. The notion that the world is divisible into discrete and enduring national cultures not only has a long pedigree but also continues to be bolstered by national governments, international agencies, and others. Nationality is perhaps the most prevalent form of social distinction and discrimination. New and intensified demands from the contemporary context are also significant. Whether as academics, students, practitioners, consumers, employees, or whatever else – the geographical origins of what challenges us has greatly expanded in recent decades. Thus the need to understand diversity has grown enormously. The Trio provide what to many appears to be a readily accessible solution to that need. Unusually, their work attracts both qualitative researchers and the more quantitative researchers. Numeracy is not required to understand their research claims, but there is also much in it to engage the statistically focused. To many it appears to many to transcended broad descriptions of national populations by purportedly identifying, indeed concisely measuring, ranking, and comparing the specifics of each such "national culture" on the basis of a discrete number of "dimensions".

What impact does the Trio's work have on decision making? This is an under-researched issue. Anecdotal evidence, and my own direct experience as member of the advisory board of the Europe, Middle East, and Africa division of a large globally located company, suggest that for decision making the Trio's national generalizations are at best without real insights and are often misleading (McSweeney *et al.*, forthcoming). "Aggregating mightily", Phillip Wagner (1975) forcefully states, "one can speak of national cultures. The chief attribute of such a broad concept is its uselessness" (p. 11). However, the Trio's depictions of national cultures have apparently proved useful for others including for some academics from whom an unattainable extensive and intensive level of understanding of global diversity is expected.

Advocates can point to examples of correct predictions. But that is not evidence of predictive power. Almost any causal theory will generate some correct predictions. Thus, identification of confirming examples, in itself, is not proof that a theory is correct (Starbuck, 2004). Dazzled by prior-belief, the supportive literature is frequently characterized by positive test strategies, confusion of causality with coincidence or

correlation, sampling on the dependent variable, a failure to consider alternative explanations, and/or blindness to multiple predictive failures.

Treating GLOBE, Hofstede, and the Trio as a collective might seem mistaken – given the frequent and sometimes quite bitter disputes between them. But, as Earley (2006) states: their differences are only "minor variants on one another's styles"(p. 923). GLOBE, Hofstede, and the Trio in common assert or suppose that national cultures are:

(1) internalized values – defined as invariant transituational preferences;

(2) shared by the population of a country;

(3) coherent (contradiction-free);

(4) the exclusive or dominant cause of behaviour;

(5) enduring;

(6) identifiable from answers to self-response questions; and

(7) depictable and rankable as "dimensions" derived from the mean scores and ranking of those answers.

Each of these propositions – some more than others – have been criticized, both before and since, the publication of the Trio's contentions (Beugelsdijk and Maseland, 2011; Bock, 1999, 2000; Brannan, 2015; Breidenbach and Nyíri, 2009; Duncan, 1980; Fang, 2005; Freeman, 1983; Jack and Westwood, 2006; Kitayama, 2002; Kirkman *et al.*, 2006; Kuper, 1999; Lenartowicz and Johnson, 2003; McSweeney, 2002a, b, 2009, 2013; Magala, 2005, 2012, 2015; Moore, 2012; Nathan, 2015; Sackmann and Phillips, 2004; Smelser, 2012; Stahl and Tung, 2014; Tung and Verbeke, 2010; Wagner, 1975; Willman, 2014; Willmott, 1993, for instance). Below, within the limitations of space, I consider some of these criticisms in relation to: the definition of "national culture"; the location(s) of such culture; its supposed causal power; its depiction as coherent; and its measurability. In doing so I want to suggest that the essentialist concept of "national culture" the Trio, and their followers, rely on, notwithstanding its popularity, has entrapped too much cross-cultural research in an anorexic and ultimately misleading conceptual cage (Weber, 1930; Keynes, 1937/1973).

Definition of culture

There are a variety of cultural theories. Broadly, one can distinguish between at least five types: psychological; mentalism (or cognition); textualism; intersubjectivism; and practise theory. On a very basic level these schools offer opposing locations and conceptions of culture. Practice theory, for instance, may move research and attention "down" from the subjective to the concrete and habitual and also "up" to impersonal discourse (Swidler, 2001). From this perspective, culture is observable in a way that subjective values are not. Of course, there are debates about observability (positivism vs anti-positivism, and so forth). All descriptions are in the last analysis theory laden (Bendassolli, 2013). Discourses may be seen as static monoliths or diverse and dynamic; as homogeneous or heterogeneous; as all-powerful or contingently powerful; as constituting or constituted (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2011).

The Trio's notion of culture is a sub-category of the psychological (Schwartz, 2013). Culture is unchanging, subjective, transituational (that is unchanging regardless of context) "values". The wider social science literature includes a wide range of definitions of "values". As Rohan (2000) states: "definitional inconsistency has been

epidemic in values theory and research" (p. 255). But the Trio and followers treat their chosen definition as if it were the exclusive one.

Many objections have been and continue to be raised against this notion of culture. Here I comment on just one aspect – the attribution of determining and predictable power to unobservable subjective values.

Whilst the Trio treat the relationship between values and action as an uncontested determinate chain – values create action – in fact, as Bardi and Schwartz (2003) state: "researchers show little agreement regarding the role of values in guiding behavior" (p. 1207). Furthermore, if "values" (however defined) affect actions to a greater or lesser degree, is it not likely to be equally true of a host of other psychological constructs: desires, goals, aims, motives, needs, traits, aversions, tastes, interests, likes, attractions, dispositions, valences, attitudes, preferences, sentiments, and so forth? Indeed such constructs may reinforce, contradict, or be independent of, any value consequences. The Trio and many of their followers illogically suppose that values have an action generating monopoly.

The Trio *et al.*'s ultra-narrow definition of culture excludes possible action variation from a multiplicity of influences and from the diversity of action contexts. Also excluded is agency – action is seen as the mere implementation of pre-given and unchanging, values. Individuals are mere photocopies from a central values machine (Bauman, 1996). That is not to deny the role in action of the normative. But as John Meyer *et al.* (1994) observe: a notion of "abstract values internalized by individuals through socialization simply leaves out too much" and is given "too much reified inevitability" (pp. 11-12).

In short, the Trio *et al.* rely on an ultra-subjective and narrow notion of culture as values. The deterministic power attributed by them to culture so defined is an assertion – at best contested and contradicted by many studies.

The location(s) of culture

Where is culture, so defined, supposed to be located in the sociospatial hierarchy?

Attributing causal power to anything – including "national culture" – to every level in a society is problematic. Why? Because relationships identified at one level may be: stronger or weaker at the lower level; they may not exist; they may be different; they may even be in the reverse direction; and the "same" cultural dimension labels may refer to different concepts at different levels (Klein and Kozlowski, 2000; Ostroff, 1993).

Supposing that what is true of a higher level (e.g. the national) is also always true of lower levels is called the "ecological fallacy" (Selvin, 1958): the fallacious inference (that is, without empirical justification) that the characteristics (concepts and/or metrics) of a higher level – (historically called "ecological") – whether derived by aggregation, speculation, or otherwise – also describe those at a lower hierarchical level or levels. In short, to assume that what is true, or what is assumed to be true, in general is true of all underlying level(s). An illustrative example is: the false derivation that every American is individualistic because the USA, it is supposed, is culturally an individualistic country. But we relate to individuals or groups of individuals – not to a nation – we negotiate with, conspire with, romance with, fight with at these levels. Nations are not "big people endowed with perceptions, desires, emotions, and other attributes of personhood" (Jackson, 2004, p. 255). Even in ancient times the fallacy was condemned. Aristotle called it "the fallacy of division". Yet it remains rampant in the cross-cultural field. Its employment is rightly criticized by each of the Trio – but they do not always "walk-the-talk" and indeed sometimes commit the same error

(McSweeney, 2002b; Brewer and Venaik, 2012). The methodological error in the cross-cultural literature is often even greater. Not merely is correspondence between the characteristics of different levels supposed/asserted, but even more strongly, the characteristics of the lower levels are said to have been created by the higher – in this instance the national. The error is therefore not just the ecological fallacy but the "mono-deterministic ecological fallacy" (McSweeney, 2013).

The notion of different socio-hierarchical levels is analytically useful and a counter to the conceiving country as a cultural monolith but this does not mean that each "level" is culturally, or otherwise, uniform (Dheer *et al.*, 2015; Brannan, 2015). For instance, the idea that defined ethnic groups have distinct, identifiable, and enduring cultures, that each is a "more or less coherent cultural" entity (Matin-Asgari, 2004) glosses over within-level diversity. Acknowledgement of differential (positive or negative) access to material or symbolic capital by different national sub-groups does not have to be predicated on acceptance of the notion that each group has a unique, collectively shared, and coherent culture. Whatever conceptual level is used – individual, organization, "cultural" group, region – is not an undifferentiated wholes. A subsuming explanation: cultural, utility-maximization, or whatever, is not an adequate substitute for knowledge derived from situated analysis. Relying for understanding on a depiction of national-level values (whether deemed meaningful/accurate or not) to describe or predict the action of individuals or organizations, evades the necessity to deal with the complexities of human decision making and the actual contexts within which action takes place (Schwartz, 2013). When, for example, institutions are seen as the mere products of "national culture", the fact that they may represent the interests of certain elites is ignored. At the individual level, cross-cultural training, that relies solely on one or other of the Trio's generalizations to characterise individuals on the basis of nationality is misleading and stereotyping.

Causality

If it is supposed that culture (however narrowly or widely defined) is causal, why restrict cultural influence just to "national culture"? Attributing causal power to one category of culture but effectively denying it to others is illogical. The Trio acknowledge other cultures but without incorporating them into their theory of action. Doing so is an empty gesture.

The view that culture has "affects", "effects", "influence", "consequences", "impacts", or "outcomes", whether deemed weak or strong, is distinguishable from claims that merely point to possible statistical relationships, associations, or correlations. An important, perhaps the most influential, attraction of the notion of subjective culture is the breath-taking claim that it shapes the social action of defined populations enduringly and predictably. It "*affect*[s] human thinking, feeling, and acting, as well as organizations and institutions" Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) state, "in *predictable* ways" (p. 31) (emphasis added). "[L]anguage, food, buildings, houses, monuments, agriculture, shrines, markets, fashions and art", are Trompenaars (1993) states, "symbols of a deeper [subjective] level culture" (p. 21). Subjective values are treated as the incontestable causal core that supposedly orchestrates behaviour. The ontological status of the "inner" is distinguished from the "outer" (institutions, practices, and so forth) but at the same time is its cause. Culture is conceived of as "normative pattern-structuring values" which act as a hierarchically superordinated control system (Schmid, 1992). Beneath, or behind, the "luxuriant variety, even the apparent randomness" (Ortner, 1984, p. 136) of life is posited a causal psychoculture. Human discretion is therefore seen as very limited and thus

practices – for example those introduced by an organization from another culture, which deviate from that supposedly culturally prescribed will at best, it is predicted, be ineffectual (cf. Gerhart and Fang, 2005).

Even if we suppose that within a defined area/group, there is an influential – even monopolistic culture – why suppose that it alone – or culture in general – is the only cause of actions there? Why should cultural causality – indeed national cultural causality – be privileged over administrative, coercive, institutional, or other means of social integration/control? One might also reasonably expect an engagement in the cross-cultural literature with alternative frameworks which seek to explore and explain national and regional configurations (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2014) – for example the extensive neo-institutional literature which has been influential in both the fields of comparative political economy and increasingly within management studies (Hall and Soskice, 2001; Wood and Demirbag, 2012). But other frameworks are ignored by the Trio *et al.* (Tung and Verbeke, 2010).

Coherent or incoherent?

Of itself, the assumption of cultural determinism (above) does not exclude the possibility of inconsistent, varying, actions. The assumption of the causal primacy of subjective culture is logically necessary, but not sufficient, to imply uniformity and predictability of social action. What the causal subjective culture models also suppose is that for each specific arena or category of actors (country, ethnic group, or whoever) culture is shared and coherent. In other words, the culture (singular), posited as somehow common to a defined population, contains no contradictory elements, it is logically consistent, and so it is impossible to construct incompatible, ambivalent, or contradictory propositions from that culture. In short, each culture is seen as an internally coherent block. The assumption of monopolistic causal cultural coherence necessarily leads to assertions of the complementarity of the logics of action. As Carl Ratner (2006, p. 61) asserts, "individuals […] participate in a common, coherent culture that is structurally integrated on a societal level". Analytically speaking there is no mechanism within a coherent culture to ever change. In effect it is conceived of as harmonious but "immobilized variables" (Fischer, 2007, p. 1). Improvization, innovation, oscillation, opportunism, localized practices, adoptions, and piecemeal changes are effectively excluded. Endogenous change – change through internal dynamics – is inconceivable. As Smelser (2012) critically states: it is impossible "to explain variations by reference to a constant" (p. 22).

But many studies have found incoherence (incompleteness, illogicality, gaps, cracks, hybridity, remixing, contradictions, ambiguity, slippages, conflicts, malleability) within cultures. As early as 1926, Bronislaw Malinowski states that: "human cultural reality is not a consistent or logical scheme, but rather a seething mixture of conflicting principles" (p. 121). Similarly, Margaret Archer (1988) describes the myth of cultural integration as: "one of the most deep-seated fallacies in social science" (p. 4). A.L. Kroeber, described the notion of "total [cultural] integration" as an "ideal condition invented by a few anthropologists not well versed in history. It is hard to imagine any historian – other than a propagandist – bringing himself to advance such a claim" (in Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 3). Clifford Geertz (1965), in harmony with what has become the accepted view in anthropology, dismissed the coherence view of culture which he ridiculed as a:

> […] seamless superorganic unity within whose collective embrace the individual simply disappears into a cloud of mystic harmony.

Cultural coherence allows no room for individuals to exploit – it is a theory of cultural automatons/dopes (cf. Wrong, 1961). If social action is assumed to be dictated by a coherent culture then practice is seen as predictable and lacking variety within defined populations. Culture is decontextualized and behaviour a *fait acompli* – as Pierre Bourdieu (1977) critically states: it is seen as mere "execution" (p. 25). In contrast, incoherent culture acknowledges indeterminism and heterogeneity, justifying a practice orientation to the study of cultures' consequences. Coherent culture posits a subsuming explanation of practice; explanations consistent with incoherent culture require situated analysis. In the former, actors are mere exemplars – in the latter they are subjects of enquiry.

The scale and intensity of internal and factional violence in Syria, Iraq, Somalia (and elsewhere) current intra-state viciousness should make the notion of a shared coherent "national culture" risible. All cultures – of any group, national or other – are hybrid.

Measurability

Conceiving national culture as a measurable and comparable object relies on the supposition (amongst others) that it is coherent – and therefore uniform and unchanging (Minkov, 2011). Accurate, or at least an adequate, measured comparison between countries is deemed possible through the identification of a small number of national-level differentiated normative patterns. Hence, the claim that a culture is depictable, as a limited, but exhaustive, number of static and calculable "dimensions" (Hofstede, 2001; House *et al.*, 2004; Minkov, 2011; Trompenaars, 1993; cf. Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1952). The qualities of foreigners are thus seen as calculable whether one wants to meet, greet, negotiate with, or attack them. "Where one lives reveals what one is like" (Allik and McCrae, 2004, p. 13). Furthermore, it is said that the "cultural distance", between countries can be measured (Gollnhofer and Turkina, 2015; Hofstede, 2001; Kogut and Singh, 1988; cf. Shenkar *et al.*, 2008). It can be "empirically found" (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005, p. 24). Some of the cultural distance literature explicitly confines the supposed measurements to comparisons between national levels. But much of the literature explicitly or implicitly fallaciously treats the measured difference as applicable to all levels. What is supposed to be measured? The status of what is measured is rather elusive and opaque in the literature. Many descriptions slide unclearly within an ontological hybridity, between representing the measurements as mere proxies and as measurements of something real at a supra-individual level, albeit that the latter is often strongly implied. However, if a culture (national or other) is conceived of as incoherent, measurement of culture – at any level – through static dimensions or distances is inconceivable (Haraway, 1989; Lewis, 1991; Mitchell, 1995).

The nature and quality of that which is measured aside, how is that which is measured supposed to influence social action? Societal-level models of all types, not just the cultural, often lack clarity about causality (Van de Vijver *et al.*, 2015). The measurement of culture by variously averaging questionnaire or interview response is the primary identification mechanism employed by subjective value culturalists. This approach has two limitations.

First, surveys provide zero direct evidence of an influence of culture on behaviour. Second, attributing causality to a statistical average is problematic. To do so relies on what Whitehead calls the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness" and Hacking (1990) names "statistical fatalism". Some averages may have predictive power (Friedman, 1953) – but that is a different type of claim. Averages are not causes. We do not meet, compete, negotiate, or form friendships with averages (Bidney, 1944; Duncan, 1980).

Sub-national analysis will often demonstrate the information poverty of national averages and reveal considerable within country heterogeneity (Lenartowicz and Johnson, 2003; Mitton, 2014; Smith *et al.*, 2008; Yousaf and Huaibin, 2013, for instance) (cf. Vieider *et al.*, 2015). As Shalom Schwartz succiently states:

> Collective mental programming of a group that is distinct from that of other groups implies substantial within-group agreement and between-group difference. Studies of values of cultural groups should therefore reveal that the members of each group ascribe similar importance to their collectively programmed values and that they differ from members of other groups on those shared core values. This, however, is most definitely not the case (Fischer and Schwartz, 2011).

The Trio have employed a number of "dimensions" to measure and rank what they argue are the distinctive components of a "national culture" thereby allowing comparative ranking of national cultures (McSweeney, 2015). Many "cross-cultural" studies which rely on or purport to rely on one or other of the Trio's descriptions of – or more specifically measurements of – a dimension or dimensions of national culture directly attribute causality (variously described as: effects, affects, consequences, influence, outcomes) to these dimensions. And yet, as Hofstede (2001) himself has said, albeit without consistently adhering to this view: "dimensions do not exist". A description of a culture, a dimension of a culture, or indeed anything, is in large part a function of the vocabulary and theoretical presuppositions of the describer (Smelser, 2012). Dimensions are not measurable empirical features which possess causal power.

Some lessons

In response to critique, Trio followers sometimes retort: "what's your alternative?" That defence is defective for a number of reasons. First, it avoids engaging with the critique – "tread softly for you tread on my dreams". Second, it denies the fundamental and progressive roles of critique. Finally, it supposes that if one claims that the anorexic national culture theory does not explain very much, or indeed that it explains nothing, one has a responsibility to offer a different – but equally slim and all-encompassing explanation. But complexity and contingency are unavoidable. There is no philosophers' stone of the social sciences. No one theory – no matter how scholarly – can possibly apply to all aspects of social life, all situations, all historical configurations. The aspiration or claim to have done so debars or discourages openness and dialogue between diverse currents and styles of work. In a complex multivariate world is it not naive to think that any theory, however good would allow us to know outcomes acontextually? It is unrealistic to suppose that a single cause invariably predicts social action. To suppose that "national culture" causes social action is to commit the methodological error of the "mono-deterministic ecological fallacy" (above).

From the commentary above, I suggest the following guidance for cross-cultural research: acknowledge definitional/conceptual variety; engage with and be open to findings outside management; avoid the ecological fallacy; do not treat everything as a cultural consequence; recognize the causal power of/with non-cultural factors; be open to recognizing transnational influences and internal diversity; avoid confirmatory bias; do not confuse correlation/coincidence with causality; test causal claims historically/longitudinally; and do not confuse national identity/patriotism with "collective [cultural] programming".

References

Abu-Lughod, L. (1991), "Writing against culture", in Fox, R.G. (Ed.), *Recapturing Anthropology*, School of American Research Press, Santa Fe, pp. 137-162.

Allik, J. and McCrae, R.R. (2004), "Toward a geography of personality traits: patterns and profiles across 36 countries", *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, Vol. 35 No. 1, pp. 13-28.

Alvesson, M. and Kärreman, D. (2011), "Decolonializing discourse: critical reflections on organizational discourse analysis", *Human Relations*, Vol. 64 No. 9, pp. 1121-1146.

Alvesson, M. and Sandberg, J. (2014), "Habitat and habitus: boxed-in versus box-breaking research", *Organization Studies*, Vol. 35 No. 7, pp. 967-987.

Archer, M.S. (1988), *Culture and Agency: The Place of Culture in Social Theory*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Bardi, A. and Schwartz, S.H. (2003), "Values and behavior: strength and structure of relations", *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, Vol. 29 No. 10, pp. 1207-1220.

Bauman, G. (1996), *Contesting Culture: Discourses of Identity in Multi-ethnic London*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Bendassolli, P.F. (2013), "Theory building in qualitative research: reconsidering the problem of induction", *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, Vol. 14 No. 1, Article 25, available at: www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1851/3497 (accessed 29 June 2015).

Beugelsdijk, S. and Maseland, R. (2011), *Culture in Economics: History, Methodological Reflections and Contemporary Applications*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Bidney, D. (1944), "On the concept of culture and some cultural fallacies", *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 46 No. 1, pp. 30-44.

Bock, P.K. (1999), *Rethinking Psychological Anthropology*, 2nd ed., Waveland, Prospects Heights, IL.

Bock, P.K. (2000), "Culture and personality revisited", *American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol. 44 No. 1, pp. 32-40.

Bourdieu, P. (1977), *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Brannan, M.Y. (2015), "Keynote foreword: the power of richness: revitalizing cross-cultural management", in Holden, N., Michailova, S. and Tietze, S. (Eds), *The Routledge Companion to Cross-Cultural Management*, Routledge, London, pp. xxxv-xliii.

Breidenbach, J. and Nyíri, P. (2009), *Seeing Culture Everywhere: From Genocide to Consumer Habits*, University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA.

Brewer, P. and Venaik, S. (2012), "On the misuse of national culture dimensions", *International Marketing Review*, Vol. 29 No. 6, pp. 673-683.

Brightman, R. (1995), "Forget culture: replacement, transcendence, relexification", *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 10 No. 4, pp. 509-546.

Brubaker, R. (2004), *Ethnicity Without Groups*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Collins, D. (2003), "The branding of management knowledge: rethinking management 'Fads'", *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 16 No. 2, pp. 186-204.

Dheer, R.J., Lenartowicz, T. and Peterson, M.F. (2015), "Mapping India's regional subcultures: implications for international management", *Journal of International Business Studies*, Vol. 46 No. 4, pp. 443-467.

Duncan, J.S. (1980), "The superorganic in American cultural geography", *Annals of the Association of American Geography*, Vol. 70 No. 2, pp. 181-198.

Earley, P.C. (2006), "Leading cultural research in the future: a matter of paradigms and taste", *Journal of International Business Studies*, Vol. 37 No. 6, pp. 922-931.

Fang, T. (2005), "From 'onion' to 'ocean': paradox and change in national cultures", *International Studies of Management and Organization*, Vol. 35 No. 4, pp. 71-90.

Fischer, M.M.J. (2007), "Culture and cultural analysis as experimental systems", *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 22 No. 1, pp. 1-64.

Fischer, R. and Schwartz, S.H. (2011), "Whence differences in value priorities? Individual, cultural, or artifactual sources", *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, Vol. 42 No. 7, pp. 1127-1144.

Freeman, D. (1983), *Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Friedman, M. (1953), *The Methodology of Positive Economic. In Essays on Positive Economics*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.

Geertz, C. (1965), *The Social History of an Indonesian Town*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.

Gerhart, B. and Fang, M. (2005), "National culture and human resource management: assumptions and evidence", *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 16 No. 6, pp. 971-986.

Gollnhofer, J.F. and Turkina, E. (2015), "Cultural distance and entry modes: implications for global expansion strategy", *Cross Cultural Management*, Vol. 22 No. 1, pp. 21-41.

Hall, P.A. and Soskice, D. (Eds) (2001), *Varieties of Capitalism: Institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Haraway, D. (1989), *Primitive Visions: Gender, Race and Nature in the World of Modern Science*, Routledge, New York, NY.

Hacking, I. (1990), *The Taming of Chance*, Cambridge University Press, CA.

Hofstede, G. (2001), *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations Across Nations*, 2nd ed., Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Hofstede, G. and Hofstede, G.J. (2005), *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*, 2nd ed., McGraw-Hill, New York, NY.

House, R.J., Hanges, P.J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P.W. and Gupta, V. (2004), *Culture, Leadership and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Jack, G. and Westwood, R. (2006), *International and Cross-Cultural Management Studies*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

Jackson, P.T. (2004), "Forum introduction: is the state a person? Why should we care?", *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 30 No. 2, pp. 255-258.

Keynes, J.M. (1937/1973), "The general theory of employment, interest and money", in Moggridge, D.E. (Ed.), *The Collected Writings of John Maynard Keynes*, Vol. 14, Macmillan, London, pp. 110-132.

Kirkman, B.L., Lowe, K.B. and Gibson, C.B. (2006), "A quarter century of culture's consequences: a review of empirical research incorporating Hofstede's cultural values framework", *Journal of International Business Studies*, Vol. 37 No. 3, pp. 285-320.

Kitayama, S. (2002), "Cultural psychology of the self: a renewed look at independence and interdependence", in von Hofsten, C. and Bäckman, L. (Eds), *Psychology at the Turn of the Millennium, Vol. 2: Social Developments and Clinical Perspectives*, Taylor & Francis, New York, NY.

Klein, K.J. and Kozlowski, S.W. (2000), *Multilevel Theory, Research, and Methods in Organizations: Foundations, Extensions, and New Directions*, Jossey-Bass.

Kogut, B. and Singh, H. (1988), "The effect of national culture on the choice of entry mode", *Journal of International Business Studies*, Vol. 19 No. 3, pp. 411-432.

Kroeber, A.L. and Kluckhohn, C. (1952), *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions, Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology*, Vol. 47, No. 1, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Kuper, A. (1999), *Culture: The Anthropologists' Account*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Lenartowicz, T. and Johnson, J.P. (2003), "A cross-national assessment of the values of Latin America managers: contrasting hues or shades of gray?", *Journal of International Business Studies*, Vol. 34 No. 3, pp. 266-281.

Lewis, M. (1991), "Elusive societies: a regional-cartographical approach to the study of human relatedness", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 81 No. 4, pp. 605-626.

McSweeney, B. (2002a), "Hofstede's model of national cultural differences and their consequences: a triumph of faith – a failure of analysis", *Human Relations*, Vol. 55 No. 1, pp. 89-117.

McSweeney, B. (2002b), "The essentials of scholarship: a reply to Hofstede", *Human Relations*, Vol. 55 No. 11, pp. 1363-1372.

McSweeney, B. (2009), "Dynamic diversity: variety and variation within countries", *Organization Studies*, Vol. 39 No. 9, pp. 933-957.

McSweeney, B. (2013), "Fashion founded on a flaw: the ecological mono-deterministic fallacy of Hofstede, GLOBE and followers", *International Marketing Review*, Vol. 30 No. 5, pp. 483-504.

McSweeney, B. (2015), "Globe, Hall, Hofstede, Huntington, Trompenaars: common foundations, common flaws", in Bruehwiler, C. and Sanchez, Y. (Eds), *Transculturalism and Business in the BRIC States: A Handbook*, Chapter 1, Gower, Farnham, pp. 13-58.

McSweeney, B., Brown, D. and Iliopoulou, S. (forthcoming), "Claiming too much, delivering too little: testing some of Hofstede's generalizations", *Irish Journal of Management*.

Magala, S. (2005), *Cross-Cultural Competence*, Routledge, London.

Magala, S. (2009), *The Management of Meaning in Organizations*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

Magala, S. (2012), "Organizing change: testing cultural limits of sustainability", *Management Decision*, Vol. 50 No. 5, pp. 900-908.

Magala, S. (2015), "Interdisciplinary research of cultural diversity", in Holden, N., Michailova, S. and Tietze, S. (Eds), *The Routledge Companion to Cross-Cultural Management*, Routledge, London, pp. 362-370.

Matin-Asgari, A. (2004), "Islamic studies and the spirit of Max Weber: a critique of cultural essentialism", *Middle East Studies*, Vol. 13 No. 3, pp. 293-312.

Meyer, J.W., John, B. and George, M.T. (1994), "Ontology and rationalization in the Western cultural account", in Scott, W.R. and Meyer, J.W. (Eds), *Institutional Environments and Organizations: Structural Complexity and Individualism*, Sage, London, pp. 9-27.

Minkov, M. (2011), *Cultural Differences in A Globalizing World*, Emerald, Bingley, Bingley.

Mitchell, D. (1995), "There's no such thing as culture: towards a reconceptualization of the idea of culture in geography", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, Vol. 20 No. 1, pp. 102-116.

Mitton, T. (2014), "The wealth of subnations: geography, institutions, and within-country development", SSRN, available at: http://ssrn.com/abstract=2239402; http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2239402 (accessed 29 June 2015).

Moore, F. (2012), *Transnational Business Cultures: Life and Work in a Multinational Corporation*, Ashgate Publishing, Aldershot.

Nathan, G. (2015), "A non-essentialist model of culture implications of identity, agency and structure within multinational/multicultural organizations", *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, Vol. 15 No. 1, pp. 101-124.

Ortner, S.B. (1984), "Theory in anthropology since the sixties", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 26 No. 1, pp. 126-166.

Ostroff, C. (1993), "Comparing correlations based on individual-level and aggregated data", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 78 No. 4, pp. 569-582.

Ratner, C. (2006), *Cultural Psychology: A Perspective on Psychological Functioning and Social Reform*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New Jersey.

Rohan, M.J. (2000), "A rose by any name? The values construct?", *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, Vol. 4 No. 3, pp. 255-277.

Sackmann, S.A. and Phillips, M.E. (2004), "Contextual influences on culture research shifting assumptions for new workplace realities", *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, Vol. 4 No. 3, pp. 370-390.

Schmid, M. (1992), "The concept of culture and its place within a theory of social action: a critique of Talcott Parson's theory of culture", in Münch, R. and Smelser, N.J. (Eds), *Theory of Culture*, University of California Press, Oakland, CA, pp. 88-120.

Schwartz, S.H. (2013), "Rethinking the concept and measurement of societal culture in the light of empirical findings", *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, Vol. 45 No. 1, pp. 5-13.

Selvin, H.C. (1958), "Durkheim's suicide and problems of empirical research", *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 63 No. 6, pp. 607-619.

Shenkar, O., Luo, Y. and Yeheskel, O. (2008), "From 'distance' to 'friction': substituting metaphors and redirecting intercultural research", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 33 No. 4, pp. 905-923.

Smelser, N.J. (2012), "Culture: coherent or non-coherent", in Münch, R. and Smelser, N.J. (Eds), *Theory of Culture*, University of California Press, Oakland, CA, pp. 3-28.

Smith, C., McSweeney, B. and Fitzgerald, R. (2008), *Re-Making Management: Between Local and Global*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Stahl, G.K. and Tung, R.L. (2014), "Towards a more balanced treatment of culture in international business studies: the need for positive cross-cultural scholarship", *Journal of International Business Studies*, Vol. 46 No. 4, pp. 391-414.

Starbuck, W.H. (2004), "Why I stopped trying to understand the real world", *Organization Studies*, Vol. 25 No. 7, pp. 1233-1254.

Swidler, A. (2001), "What anchors cultural practices", in Schatzki, T.R., Knorr Cetina, K. and von Savigny, E. (Eds), *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*, Routledge, New York, NY, pp. 74-92.

Trompenaars, F. (1993), *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business*, Nicholas Brealey Publishing, London.

Tung, R.L. and Verbeke, A. (2010), "Beyond Hofstede and GLOBE: improving the quality of cross-national research", *Journal of International Business Studies*, Vol. 41 No. 8, pp. 1259-1274.

Van de Vijver, F.J., Van Hemert, D.A. and Poortinga, Y.H. (2015), *Multilevel Analysis of Individuals and Cultures*, Psychology Press, London.

Vieider, F.M., Chmura, T., Fisher, T., Kusakawa, T., Martinsson, P., Thompson, F.M. and Sunday, A. (2015), "Within-versus between-country differences in risk attitudes: implications for cultural comparisons", *Theory and Decision*, Vol. 78 No. 2, pp. 209-218.

Wagner, P.L. (1975), "The themes of cultural geography rethought", *Yearbook of the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers*, Vol. 37 No. 1, pp. 7-14.

Weber, M. (1930), *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, (Trans by T. Parsons), Unwin University Books, London.

Willman, O. (2014), *Understanding Management: The Social Science Foundations*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Willmott, H. (1993), "Breaking the paradigm mentality", *Organization Studies*, Vol. 14 No. 5, pp. 681-719.

Wood, G. and Demirbag, M. (Eds) (2012), *Handbook of Institutional Approaches to International Business*, Edward Elgar, pp. 142-172.

Wrong, D. (1961), "The oversocialized conception of man in modern sociology", *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 26, pp. 183-193.

Yousaf, S. and Huaibin, L. (2013), "Profiling consumer behavior in the context of involvement level and demographic factors: evidence of within-country differences from a developing economy", *Journal of Global Marketing*, Vol. 26 No. 1, pp. 1-17.

Further reading

Allport, G.W. (1961), *Pattern and Growth in Personality*, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, New York, NY.

Cancian, F.M. (1975), *What are Norms? A Study of Beliefs and Action in a Maya Community*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Holden, N., Michailova, S. and Tietze, S. (Eds) (2015), *The Routledge Companion to Cross-Cultural Management*, Routledge, New York, NY.

Münch, R. and Smelser, N.J.J (1992), *Theory of Culture*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA.

MacIntyre, A. (1985), *After Virtue*, 2nd ed., Duckworth, London.

Ortner, S.B. (1997), "Introduction", *Representations*, Vol. 59, Summer, pp. 1-13.

Corresponding author
Professor Brendan McSweeney can be contacted at: brendanmcsweeney@googlemail.com