

The Chinese, on the other hand, have learned to internalize conflict and seem to ignore it. Conflict is not healthy, desirable, or constructive.

If we begin by trying to understand the basic values and philosophy of those involved, we might then be able to develop acceptable means for solving some of the cross-cultural conflicts. Perhaps less obvious to those embroiled in conflicts, we also need to be respectful and maintain cordiality—even when we disagree.

Source: adapted by Robert Moran in 2016 from a speech he delivered in Europe.

SYSTEMS APPROACH TO CULTURE

There are many different anthropological approaches to cultural analysis, and many prefer to use a coordinated systems approach as an alternative to understanding other cultures. A system, in this sense, refers to an ordered assemblage or combination of correlated parts that form a unitary whole.²¹

Kinship system. The family relationships and the way a people reproduce, train, and socialize their children; the typical North American family is a nuclear and rather independent unit. In many countries, there may be an extended family that consists of several generations held together through the male line (patrilineal) or through the female line (matrilineal). Such families have a powerful influence on child rearing, and often on nation building.

Educational system. How young or new members of a society are provided with information, knowledge, skills, and values may be formal and informal within any culture. How people learn varies by culture.

Economic system. The manner in which the society produces and distributes its goods and services is in some ways an extension of the family; in Japan it is group-oriented. Until recently, the world was divided into capitalistic or socialistic economic blocs, and economies were labeled *First World* (advanced free enterprise systems); *Second World* (socialist or communistic societies based on centralized planning and control); and *Third World* (developing nations moving from the agricultural to industrial or postindustrial stages). These categories are now outdated. Today, economies are mixed—some supposed Third World economies have high-technology sectors, as in India and China; and Second World countries, formerly in the European Eastern Bloc, are now free-market economies. Another trend beyond national economies is toward regional economic cooperatives or associations that cut across national and ideological boundaries, such as is happening with the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the European Union. Macroeconomics is the study of such systems. Globalization critics say it benefits only the elite. In fact, "a less open world would hurt the poor most of all."²²

Political system. The dominant means of governance for maintaining order and exercising power or authority. In some cultures it is tribal, where chiefs rule; others have a ruling royal family with an operating king, while some prefer democracy.

Religious system. The means for providing meaning and motivation beyond the material aspects of life; that is, the spiritual side of a culture or its approach to the supernatural may lift a people to great heights of accomplishment, as is witnessed in the pyramids of Egypt and the Renaissance of Europe. It is possible to project the history and future of India, for instance, in terms of the impact of its belief in reincarnation, which is enshrined in its major religion. Diverse national cultures can be somewhat unified under a shared religious belief in Islam or Christianity, for example. In some countries, Islam is becoming the basis for governance, legal, and political systems. In others, religion dominates legal and political systems, such as in Israel. Unfortunately, history demonstrates that in the name of religion, zealots and extremists may engage in culturally repressive behavior, such as religious persecution, ethnic cleansing, terrorism of nonbelievers, and even "holy" wars. Many religions also teach that their religious beliefs are the correct ones and other religious beliefs are wrong.

Association system. The network of social groupings that people form, whether in person or electronically, may range from fraternal and secret societies to professional/trade associations. Some cultures are very group-oriented and create formal and informal associations for every conceivable type of activity (e.g., the culture in the US). In some countries, families organize into clans, finding it difficult to work together for the common national good, as in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Health system. The concepts of health and wholeness, well-being, and medical problems differ by culture. Some countries have witch doctors, spiritual remedies, and herb medications. Others, like India, have fewer government-sponsored social services, while Britain has a system of socialized medicine. The US is in the midst of a major transition in its healthcare and delivery system, and there is increasing emphasis on universal coverage, prevention, and wellness health models. Medical practitioners can be culturally biased. For example, Western medicine tended to ignore folk medicine, especially in Asia and Africa.

Recreational system. What may be considered play in one culture may be viewed as work in another, and vice versa. In some cultures, "sport" has considerable political implications; in others, it is solely for enjoyment; while in still others, it is big business. Some cultures cherish the creative and performing arts, providing financial support for artists and musicians. Certain types of entertainment, such as a form of folk dancing, seem to cut across cultures.

KEY CULTURAL TERMINOLOGY

The specialists who make a formal study of culture use terms that may be helpful to those trying to comprehend the significance of this phenomenon in business or international life.

Tradition

This is a very important aspect of culture that may be expressed in unwritten customs, taboos, and sanctions. Tradition can program a people as to what are proper behaviors and proce-