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Thinking Paradoxically

We live in a world of bewildering paradoxes. As globalization has proceeded, it has created many changes that influence all or most of us, sometimes in very minor ways and at other times critically. In turn, we now confront many cross-cultural paradoxes associated directly with, and resulting from, globalization. But what is a paradox, and why are cross-cultural paradoxes helpful and frequently essential for understanding and casting light on the changes that are occurring because of globalization? These two basic questions represent the underlying rationale for this book.

Professor Maggi Phillips of Pepperdine University, who reviewed an early draft of this book, captured its fundamentals by pointing out that the following propositions could be gleaned from what I had written and the realities confronting all of us (I have edited her last point slightly):

- Paradoxes exist.
- Recognizing this reality and employing paradoxical reasoning are necessary attributes of successful functioning in the globalizing world.
- The process of globalizing highlights, develops, propels, and creates culturally-based paradoxes.
- Paradoxes are viable links between culture and globalization.
- Cross-cultural paradoxes help us understand and shed light on the changes that are occurring because of globalization.

Before defining *paradox* and the various types, let us consider some important paradoxes focusing on culture and globalization:

1. Tony Fang (1999), a native of China now teaching at the University of Stockholm, has authored an insightful book built around one central paradox,

namely, that Western negotiators regularly complain that Chinese negotiators are both very deceptive and very sincere. Frequently I have heard the same complaint when training international executives and negotiators. How can the Chinese be both very deceptive and very sincere simultaneously, and why?

2. Languages are dying at a dramatic rate, from an estimated 15,000 languages just 100 years ago to some 7,000 today. Cultural anthropologists and linguists are so alarmed by this development that they regularly hold conferences on the "death of languages." They believe, most probably correctly, that all or most languages possess unique and critical features helpful for understanding our past, present, and future. However, once lost, a language can rarely if ever be retrieved. Yet, while languages are dying, they are becoming increasingly influential. Why and how can this be?

3. Today it is generally agreed that the world is rapidly globalizing, with increasing economic, political, and cultural links within and across nations. At this point it is useful to define globalization fully before discussing our third paradox. Globalization refers to the increasing interdependence among national governments, business firms, nonprofit organizations, and individual citizens. Three primary mechanisms facilitating globalization are (1) the free movement of goods, services, talents, capital, knowledge, ideas, and communications across national boundaries; (2) the creation of new technologies such as the Internet and highly efficient airplanes that facilitate such free movement; and (3) the lowering of tariffs and other impediments to this movement (Bhagwati, 2004; Friedman, 2005; Gupta & Govindarajan, 2004). Between 1948 and 2000 the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) reduced tariffs from an average of 40% to less than 4% among participating nations. An outstanding example of increasing interdependence occurred in 1997–1998 when investors rapidly withdrew capital from Southeast Asian nations because of rising risk levels, nearly creating a global depression. However, the quick and interdependent actions by international financial agencies such as the World Bank and the central banks of several nations saved the day. Similarly, the World Trade Organization (WTO) was founded in 1995 as a logical extension of the GATT. The WTO now consists of 149 nations (out of the 220 in the world) and rules on numerous issues involving nations and companies, such as whether a particular nation is violating the agreed-on trade regulations governing international commerce. If a nation is found to be in violation, the WTO describes the steps it must take to avoid severe penalties.

Further, globalization as measured by trade expansion has been increasing dramatically for at least two centuries, in spite of two world wars and other impediments. Between 1820 and 1992, the following increases

occurred: world population, 5-fold; income per person, 8-fold; world income, 40-fold; and world trade, 540-fold (Streeten, 2001). Since 1992 trade has more than doubled, with developing nations' trade expanding at more than twice the rate of that of industrial nations. Estimates by the World Bank and the McKinsey Company indicate that the percentage of gross world product involved in international trade will rise from the current 20–25% to a probable 80% within three decades (Mann, 2006), barring occurrences such as a widespread nuclear war.

However, at the same time that interdependence is increasing, nations are taking unilateral actions—such as the invasion of Iraq by the United States, the United States' unilateral withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol concerning environmental degradation, and the failure of other nations to live up to their agreements on this Protocol—even when the majority of nations express great disapproval. As this discussion suggests, it is not only the United States that engages in such unilateral activities; other nations do so on a variety of issues, such as persecuting citizens of minority groups, openly flouting international law (as happened in the Balkans during the 1990s), and supporting either openly or implicitly such commercial activities as the dumping or transport-ing of an excessive number of low-priced goods in violation of the rules gov-erning world trade. These examples and our discussion relate directly to our third paradox, namely, that nations are becoming increasingly powerful and powerless simultaneously in terms of the actions they can take as globaliza-tion proceeds. Why?

4. Time is a critical feature of many activities, such as negotiating across national and ethnic cultures. Time can be thought of as three separate circles, representing past, present, and future, with the size of each circle represent-ing its assumed degree of importance. An individual can express definite pref-erences in terms of the relationships among the three circles and the perceived degree to which they overlap. However, time is frequently considered as only one circle. How can time be considered as both three circles and only one cir-cle, and why? What are the implications of these differing perspectives?

5. China is the world's largest nation in terms of population, with 1.3 billion people of an estimated world population of 6.5 billion. But China is a very large and a very small economic market simultaneously. How can this be, and why?

This chapter presents some essential concepts that serve as background for understanding the links between paradoxical reasoning, culture, and globalization. We then describe the positive features of paradoxes, followed by their limitations.

Essential Concepts

Marieke de Mooij (2005) succinctly defines a paradox as a statement that seems to be untrue but is in fact true. In addition, Lewis (2000) defines a paradox as a situation involving "contradictory yet interrelated elements— elements that seem logical in isolation but absurd and irrational when appearing simultaneously" (p. 760). Similarly Quinn and Cameron (1988) point out that paradox is characterized by the "simultaneous presence of contradictory, even mutually exclusive elements" (p. 2), while Eisenhardt (2000) defines paradox as "the simultaneous existence of two inconsistent states such as that between innovation and efficiency" (p. 703). This book incorporates all these ideas into the following definition of a paradox: It is a statement consisting of inconsistent or contradictory or even mutually exclusive elements that seems to be untrue but is in fact true.

This book also highlights a particular type of paradox, the dilemma. Specifically, a *dilemma* is a situation facing a decision maker who can select only one of either two equally attractive or two equally unattractive alternatives. For example, managers can cut costs by decreasing investment in innovation, or they can promote innovation, which automatically increases costs. For additional examples of dilemmas, see Paradoxes 3.1 and 3.10. After reading each chapter, the reader may want to identify those paradoxes that are dilemmas. Class discussions can focus on the selections made by individuals or small groups.

As this discussion indicates, this book follows closely this widely shared perspective on paradox, as the examples of the thought-provoking paradoxes provided directly above confirm. Paradoxes may contain three or more contradictory or inconsistent elements, although such formulations are rare. For ease of understanding, we will focus on paradoxes of only two elements. It is the simultaneous existence of two contradictory or inconsistent elements that represents the essence of paradox.

As Osland (1995) points out, there appear to be three methods for shedding light on paradoxes and understanding them (see also Quinn & Cameron, 1988; Smith & Berg, 1987). First, an individual can accept both truths or elements in each paradox, even though they are contradictory or contrasting. Second, an individual can reframe the situation, which is the method Bertrand Russell (1913) employed to shed light on the famous Liar Paradox: All Cretans are liars; I never tell the truth. Russell argues that each of these statements is valid but in different contexts and at different levels of analysis. The third method accepts the paradox but looks for a higher unifying principle to understand it. In this book the higher unifying principle for each paradox in our globalizing world is cultural explanation, as the title of the

book indicates. Still, paradoxes exist and will not go away because we have a good understanding of them. The focus is on paradoxes in a globalizing world, which can be reasonably addressed and understood through an analysis of cross-cultural considerations.

Also, the book examines the research relating to many national and ethnic cultures but formulates each of the 93 paradoxes so that no national culture is specifically mentioned (see the Table of Contents). The objective is to move the analysis of culture to a higher level, or to ask, for example, how do individualistic cultures differ from collectivistic, or group-centered, cultures?

Paradoxes are usually framed as statements. For example, a famous paradox espoused by the Bauhaus school of modern architecture is that "less is more." Advocates of this school of thought argue that the more elaborate a structure is, the less beauty there is in it. There is no reason, however, that paradoxes cannot be framed as questions, such as "Less is more?" No meaning is lost. I employ the question format in this book for several reasons, the most important of which is that it captures the imagination and the active collaboration of readers in the process of transmitting ideas from author to reader. However, the reader will note that the questions do not contain a formal statement or treatment of the paradox. Rather, the formal treatment of each paradox is found within each of the chapters. It is interesting to note that even though the paradox of "less is more" is well known, it represents an ideology or definite point of view rather than an actual reality or situation. In this book ideological paradoxes are not of interest. The focus is on using cross-cultural paradoxes to understand the changes being wrought by globalization.

There are various types of paradoxes. In this book we focus on only three major types. First, some paradoxes can be tested empirically, such as the hypothesis that there are free riders or shirkers in small groups in some cultures and very involved contributors in small groups within other cultures. I will explain such fascinating paradoxes, even when additional research seems warranted. However, proving that the paradox exists does not eliminate it. There are concrete suggestions that can be formulated to get around the paradox and soften its impact, but its reality is a fact of life. We must live with paradoxes. Second, some paradoxes cannot be tested empirically with any finality, but close observation of history and experience suggests that they are valid, such as whether globalization as we are experiencing it is significantly different from its counterparts at previous points in history or whether globalization is impossible/doomed or inevitable unless some unforeseen event such as a worldwide epidemic occurs. Our third type of paradox is the dilemma, discussed above.

I have defined *globalization* and the three primary mechanisms for facilitating it on page 4. It is noteworthy that researchers and theorists are now using the word *complexity* as a synonym for *globalization*, with all the attendant connotations of high risk, uncertainty, and unknown outcomes. For example, the *Handbook of Global Management* is subtitled *A Guide for Managing Complexity* (Lane, Maznevski, Mendenhall, & McNett, 2004). Globalization, as that book suggests, is not an easy phenomenon to understand, but paradoxical reasoning can facilitate our understanding.

Paradoxical reasoning has been much neglected and may be the least emphasized way of thinking about our rapidly globalizing world. Books have been based on a single paradox. For example, Richard Layard (2005) points out that the standard of living in developed nations has dramatically increased in the past 50 years but personal happiness has, paradoxically, declined. However, only rarely does a book move beyond one paradox and typically only in a very specific area of study, such as the treatment of nine expatriate paradoxes in Osland and Osland (2006; see Osland, 1995) or Smith and Berg's treatment of paradoxes in cross-cultural groups (1997; see Paradox 3.10). Only one book, John Naisbitt's *Global Paradox* (1994), with its major paradoxical proposition of the simultaneous increase of nationalism and globalization, has incorporated the terms *global* and *paradox* in its title. In contrast, this book describes a very large number of paradoxes and discusses them in some depth. It is my hope that we can address these paradoxes explicitly so that we can understand each one in a new and insightful manner, even to the extent of being able to offer suggestions for softening the impact of some of them. The intent of this book is to place paradoxical thinking at the forefront of the analysis and interpretation of culture and globalization.

Paradoxes and Their Positive Features

Given the complexity of both culture and globalization, it was difficult creating a structure for presenting each paradox and integrating the chapters and the 93 paradoxes. I believe that this difficulty has been overcome, as the Table of Contents indicates. Also, as a result, I invite the reader to be *actively* involved in the discussions that the question format should facilitate. The reader can easily read and critique the description that follows the paradox.

Thinking and reasoning paradoxically emphasizes a conceptual approach. There is also the possibility that because of the large number of paradoxes in this book, the reader may become emotionally committed both to examining cross-cultural issues in depth and to reasoning paradoxically. At the very

least, the reader is encouraged to refine or disagree entirely with any of the paradoxes. This process may increase not only the range and power of conceptual frameworks but even the emotional commitment to undertake additional reading and action-based activities. Such activities include experiential cross-cultural exercises and residencies of 6 months or longer in another national culture.

When a reader disagrees with the formulation or resolution of a specific paradox, it should be possible to describe the reasons for such disagreement in detail. Even more positively, the reader is invited to develop an alternative explanation of the paradox. The reader can also formulate paradoxes in addition to those presented in this book. All these activities facilitate the active involvement of the reader in the learning process. You can e-mail your suggestions and thoughts to mgannon@csusm.edu. In the event that a second edition of this book is published, I will explicitly cite individuals by name if any of their ideas or paradoxes are incorporated into the body of that text.

In many instances I have also tried to facilitate active involvement by inviting the reader to respond, *before* reading the explanation following a paradox, to one of the following: a very small number of survey items, a case study or critical incident, the reader's own definition of a particular concept, or a short experiential exercise. All these activities are designed to increase both conceptual understanding and emotional commitment. There are also questions for discussion at the end of each chapter, as well as at least one exercise, and takeaways, or key points, that the reader can apply when dealing with individuals from other cultures, both within a national culture and across national cultures.

A basic premise of this book and of paradoxical reasoning is that to enhance our understanding of culture and globalization, we need to take advantage of as many ways of looking at reality as possible. As already described in the discussion of the major types of paradoxes above, some of these ways are based on theory and the rigorous testing of resulting hypotheses, while others are located in historical and current observations that are difficult if not impossible to test systematically. Sometimes it is possible to test a specific hypothesis, such as "Is globalization a myth or a fact?" However, current and historical observations suggest that the resulting test cannot be accepted with any finality, as in this particular example. I would like to avoid the possibility of overemphasizing some methods of reasoning and denigrating others or simply disregarding them. Hence I emphasize these two types of paradoxes, in addition to dilemmas, and identify when statistical testing cannot be accepted with finality.

Thinking and reasoning paradoxically about culture and globalization reflect a nuanced rather than a definitive approach. This world and its attendant issues

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become tones of gray rather than either black or white. Frequently it is not possible or feasible to provide definitive solutions for real-world puzzles, and paradoxes help explain why this state of affairs exists.

Further, thinking paradoxically tends to minimize distortions and stereotyping, because it focuses not on defending a statement but on attempting to resolve the paradoxes we all confront. Also, paradoxical reasoning minimizes generalizations about specific cultures that may or may not be accurate or that may have been accurate in the past but are no longer so. As indicated previously, the question-and-discussion format avoids statements singling out a cultural group in terms of features and profiles in favor of generalizing at a higher level of analysis. For example, it is possible to compare individualistic cultures, in which individuals are expected to make wise decisions benefiting themselves and those close to them, and group-oriented, collectivistic cultures, in which individuals are expected to make decisions satisfying group members and group norms.

Relatedly, this book also seeks to minimize and, when appropriate, to avoid statements derived from important empirical, survey-based studies that rank numerous nations on specific cultural dimensions such as individualism or power distance without regard for historical context and current developments (Hofstede, 2001; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004; Inglehart, Basaanez, Diez-Medrana, Halman, & Luijkx, 2004). For example, Hofstede analyzed 53 national cultures using a standardized survey of 22 items. He statistically reduced the 22 items to five bipolar scales or dimensions, two of which are individualism-collectivism and power distance. *Individualism-collectivism* refers to the degree to which either the preferences of the individual or the values and norms of the group dominate individual decision making and choice. In an individualistic culture, people see themselves as separate and independent from the groups in which they interact, and they make decisions accordingly. Conversely, people in a collectivist culture are integrated into and dependent on the group, even for their sense of personal identity. They will sacrifice, sometimes at great cost, personal wishes and desires to satisfy the norms of the group. Hofstede then defines *power distance* as the degree to which members of a national culture accept an unequal distribution of rewards and power among its citizens. Thus it is possible to scale and rank order the 53 nations on individualism-collectivism, power distance, and other scales.

Some issues arise with any bipolar dimensions, a major one of which is that a national culture can be scaled and ranked at only one point on each dimension, making it infeasible to indicate that a specific national culture may be simultaneously individualistic and collectivistic, and simultaneously low and high on power distance, but at different points in time or in different contexts.

The focus in this book is on contradictory or contrasting paradoxical elements rather than on such statements as "Cultural Group X is different from Cultural Group Y in terms of relative scores and relative rankings on various scales or measures, including . . ."

Still, this book employs the research results from such important studies to facilitate the structuring of some of our paradoxes and to enhance the learning process. These paradoxes are framed at a different and higher level of analysis than that used in the survey-based studies. Such studies are very valuable, especially for the specialist attempting to make sense of the roiling and globalizing world in which we live.

As indicated in the Preface, disciplines such as cultural anthropology and cross-cultural psychology and management explicitly accept the distinction between *etic*, or cultural-general, analysis and *emic*, or culture-specific, analysis as two broad and overlapping perspectives for classifying cross-cultural studies. Linguists created the terms *etic* and *emic* to classify sounds into two types: those found in every language (etic) and those specific to one language or a small group of related languages (emic). The survey-based method, with its emphasis on rating and ranking national cultures along several dimensions to derive national profiles, represents an etic, or culture-general, perspective. In contrast, analyzing each national culture in depth to ascertain and highlight its unique and distinctive dimensions typifies an emic, or culture-specific, perspective. Paradoxical reasoning builds on both etic and emic perspectives but represents a third major and integrative perspective on culture. And since such reasoning indicates that cross-cultural paradoxes are helpful and frequently essential to understanding the changes brought about by globalization, it also represents a method for studying culture.

Paradoxical reasoning enlarges the manner in which individuals *frame* or *structure* their conceptual understanding of cross-cultural and global issues. As such, it is very appropriate in a globalizing world in which individuals from different cultures and nations "collide," or meet one another, with increasing frequency. While cultural differences still exist, individuals from different cultures know far more about one another than did their counterparts 100 years ago or even 25 years ago. This is particularly true for specific groups, such as businesspeople, nonprofit development specialists working around the world, and professors and students involved in international exchanges.

As a specific illustration of increased familiarity, Western visitors to China were a rarity in many Chinese cities until recent years, and many Chinese people took great interest in Western culture during the 1980s and 1990s. Until this time the vast majority of the Chinese had limited or no access to Western ways because of government policies during the Mao era, which

effectively ended in 1978, when China introduced many features of modern capitalism. In the early 1990s, Rachel DeWoskin, a recent college graduate and citizen of the United States, was recruited on the streets of Beijing to become a star in the first soap opera examining the West in any fashion. As she humorously but insightfully reports in *Foreign Babes in Beijing* (2005), this soap opera became for several years the leading television show in China, with more than 50 million regular viewers. One of her key roles in the soap opera was that of the conniving Western *femme fatale* who breaks up the traditional Chinese marriage and family. Over time, Chinese television has become increasingly sophisticated about depicting Westerners and has moved away from such stereotyping.

In many ways the world in the very recent past was balkanized into very identifiable national cultures, which restricted easy movement and firsthand observation and understanding; for example, citizens of Communist nations were restricted from traveling outside them, and the ability of citizens of European nations to work in other European nations was limited until the creation of the EU. Today the opposite situation prevails in many parts of the world, and moving from one national culture to another, either temporarily or permanently, has become much easier.

Succinctly, there are numerous positive features associated with the use of paradoxes in our multicultural world, including the active involvement of readers and participants in the educational process; the dynamic nature of paradoxes, which allows us to go beyond static cultural profiles and descriptions; their grounding in real-world situations; and the formulation of paradoxes around issues that are typically important and engaging across a wide variety of individuals and audiences.

Limitations

Still, there are limitations associated with the use of paradoxes. Like other cross-cultural approaches, paradoxes are appropriate for some situations but not others; they possess both strengths and limitations. For instance, paradoxes do not provide etic, or culture-general, profiles of dimensions along which cultures can vary, as the justly popular cross-cultural survey is able to do (Hofstede, 2001; House et al., 2004; Inglehart et al., 2004). Nor do paradoxes provide an emic, or in-depth, understanding of a specific culture, as case studies and the use of metaphors in the cross-cultural arena do (see Gannon, 2004; Mendenhall & Oddou, 2000). As these examples suggest, I believe that it is critical not to be wedded to one or a few methods to the exclusion of others.

Moreover, this book accepts the inevitability of using the basic units of analysis in cross-cultural research. These units can be one or more of the following: ethnic cultures; regional and ethnic cultures within one nation; national cultures; and clusters of national cultures with similar values, languages, and religions. It is even possible to observe the dynamics of culture at the individual level of analysis. For example, a national culture may have a very strong collectivistic orientation about decision making, expressed in both its ideals and its actual practices, and the norm may be that group-based concerns generally take precedence over individual preferences. Still, some individuals within this culture may deviate from this profile and emphasize decisions that will primarily benefit them, even at the expense of others.

However, restricting the use of one or more of these units of analysis to only hypothesis-testing empirical research narrows and limits the range of possibilities under consideration and the paradoxes that can be considered. For example, the paradox that nations are becoming increasingly powerful and powerless simultaneously because of globalization most probably cannot be tested statistically, at least with any finality. This paradox, however, can be discussed and reasonably addressed through the use of historical and current examples. As noted already, this book presents two major and contrasting types of paradoxes (in addition to the dilemma). One type can be tested empirically with some degree of finality, while the other type relies on historical and current observation.

Sometimes the use of specific units of analysis and particular methodologies creates distortions in our globalizing world and limits the topics that can be considered. For example, U.S. culture has been ranked as the most individualistic among 53 nations studied by Hofstede (2001); that is, this culture tends to emphasize self-interest at the expense of group interests and cohesion. Although the Hofstede study on which this generalization is based employed data collected from 1967 through 1973, recent research—and in particular the GLOBE study of 62 national cultures—strongly supports the proposition that U.S. citizens are highly individualistic (Gelfand, Bhawuk, Nishii, & Bechtold, 2004).

Yet close observation would suggest that such citizens are frequently group oriented, as witnessed by their average involvement in three or four community or civic associations, their high rate of weekly church attendance, and their significant contributions to charity. Such contributions seem to be equal to, and probably greater than, those made by Europeans on a per capita basis once governmental support for the arts and welfare are considered. In his survey of the United States (July 16, 2005), John Parker of *The Economist* notes that charitable giving and participation in voluntary organizations have increased in the past decade. Some of this increase results

from the rise of virtual and real communities facilitated by www.meetup
.com. Users of this service indicate their interests and receive a list of specific
meetings of like-minded individuals within 15 miles of their residences.
Meetup has become the hub around which 100,000 clubs with more than
2 million members revolve. In the spring of 2005 there were 2,400 Meetup
meetings a week, up 50% from a year earlier. To complicate matters, some of
the major ethnic groups in the United States, such as Hispanic Americans,
tend to be more collectivistic and group oriented than the largest identifiable
group, white Anglo-Saxons.

In addition, there are many different types of individualism, including
"proud" individualism, aggressive individualism, egalitarian individualism,
and so forth (see Gannon, 2004). There are also many different types of col-
lectivism, such as the relation-based kinship system of the Chinese and the
religion-dominated system in India. U.S. culture appears to exhibit more than
one type of individualism, as in the simultaneous existence of aggressive and
egalitarian individualism, at least in terms of access to opportunities (Stewart
& Bennett, 1991), as well as a high degree of collectivism among some of its
largest ethnic groups.

Further, there are many dimensions, such as individualism-collectivism
and power distance, that large cross-cultural surveys of several national cul-
tures have identified. Rather than focusing on only national cultures and
ranking them on these dimensions to obtain cultural profiles, it is feasible
and even desirable to frame some paradoxes in terms of a single relevant
dimension relating directly to each specific paradox. For example, why are
performance and success in individualistic cultures evaluated in terms of a
multiplicative relationship between ability and motivation, while in collec-
tivistic or group-oriented cultures, the relationship is viewed as additive (see
Chapter 3)?

Along the same line of thinking, it is noteworthy that individualism-
collectivism has been studied empirically more frequently and intensely than
the large number of other dimensions that have also been found to be rele-
vant. In fact, formal study of this dimension began at least 100 years ago.
Power distance is the second dimension of interest to many if not most
researchers. I will emphasize these two dimensions as well as a few others
when constructing paradoxes, with the reminder that several additional valid
and reliable dimensions have been constructed to rate and rank and thereby
profile national cultures.

The remainder of the book focuses exclusively on the 93 paradoxes. Each
paradox is numbered for ease of reading and reference within the chapters.
Each paradox is followed by an explanation or essay that attempts to shed
light on it. While I would recommend reading the book sequentially because

the later paradoxes are more complex than the earlier ones and build on them, it is not necessary to do so. It seems important that the reader peruse at least Chapter 1 and preferably Chapter 2 before the other chapters because Chapters 1 and 2 lay the foundation for the remainder of the book. I have built this flexibility into the book because the reader may be interested in specific paradoxes and may want to direct attention only to them. Some important terms, however, are defined only the first time they are used in the book. The reader can find all these definitions by tracking down the terms in the Index.

This book has three major parts. Part I, Conceptual Foundations, contains two chapters that constitute the basis for understanding paradoxical reasoning, or our third perspective on culture. Chapter 1 describes paradoxical reasoning in detail, while Chapter 2 sheds light on conceptualizing and perceiving culture. Part II is Behavioral Issues, including leadership, motivation, and group behavior (Chapter 3); communicating across cultures (Chapter 4); crossing cultures (Chapter 5); and negotiating across cultures (Chapter 6). In Part III the focus is the Broader Context, such as economic development and globalization. This part includes the related topics of multiethnicity, religion, geography, and immigration (Chapter 7); economic development (Chapter 8); globalization (Chapter 9); and business strategy, the business functions, and international human resource management (Chapter 10).

Admittedly, placing specific paradoxes in one chapter rather than others is a matter not only of logic but of preference. Some paradoxes could fit into more than one chapter. By and large, however, the placement should make sense to the reader.

Finally, I welcome any comments or suggestions you may have, including your assessment and evaluation of the paradoxes and recommendations of additional paradoxes. As indicated earlier, you can e-mail these comments and suggestions to mgannon@csusm.edu

Takeaways

1. In our globalizing world paradoxes exist, and recognizing this reality and employing paradoxical reasoning help us function effectively.

2. Cross-cultural paradoxes are helpful and frequently essential for understanding the changes wrought by globalization.

3. When experiencing a perplexing and possibly uncomfortable cross-cultural situation, it is useful to structure it as a paradox and attempt to understand it. This reasoning process can help provide insight and, in the process, minimize any negative feelings.

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4. It is important to note that a paradox represents an actual situation or reality. It is advisable to suspend spontaneous evaluative statements or judgments and frame this reality as a paradox to understand it through cultural considerations.

5. The definition of *paradox* is a statement of inconsistent or contradictory elements that seems untrue but is in fact true. A dilemma implies the freedom to choose one equally reasonable alternative over another equally reasonable alternative. Hence we can say that only some paradoxes are dilemmas.

Discussion Questions

1. In what way or ways does paradoxical reasoning go beyond strict scientific reasoning?

2. Do you feel that the famous statement in architecture that "less is more" is a paradox? Why or why not?

3. What are the etic and emic perspectives on culture? Why is this distinction important? Does paradoxical reasoning represent a distinctive way of analyzing culture? Why or why not?

4. What do you consider to be the three most important strengths and the three most important limitations associated with paradoxical reasoning? Why?

5. What are the three methods for shedding light on paradoxes? Which of these three methods is employed in this book? Do you feel that this method is more appropriate today than 50 years ago? Why or why not?

6. How did Bertrand Russell shed light on the famous Liar Paradox: All Cretans are liars; I never tell the truth? Is this approach emphasized in this book? Why or why not?

Exercises

1. It is typical for people to begin to think about a paradox, sometimes only superficially, when they directly experience a perplexing cross-cultural situation. Frequently, however, individuals do not go beyond this first stage. Class members should form small groups to explore and discuss personal experiences that reflect such cross-cultural perplexity, both in their home nation and outside it. Each group should appoint a secretary who can present the group's experiences to the class, along with any paradoxes its members have formulated. Small-group discussion should be limited to 15–30 minutes.

2. Formulate a paradox based on personal experiences and write a three-page paper describing it.

3. When she started teaching in an MBA program at a Taiwanese university, Professor Lois Olson of San Diego State University arrived a half hour late for dinner at the faculty cafeteria, and faculty were already leaving. She greeted all of them cordially. When the director asked Professor Olson whether she had already eaten, she replied in the negative. Quickly the director signaled that the entire faculty should return to the cafeteria, even though Professor Olson indicated that she did not mind eating alone, and a second meal was served for all.

   In small groups, please discuss the following:

   - Based on the material in this chapter, would you say that this incident represents a paradox? Why or why not?
   - In terms of the survey-based etic (culture-general) studies discussed in the chapter, how would you explain this situation?
   - Have any group members experienced similar perplexing situations?

Each group should appoint a recorder who can report the conclusions the group reached and any personal experiences to the class.