The Question of Culture: Anthropology and Transnational Corporate Interaction

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ABSTRACT

Transnational business interactions are often fraught with difficulties due to cultural differences between the participating corporate actors, leading to failed partnerships and monetary losses. Culture theory in transnational business draws from sociological and psychological theoretical models of culture, at the exclusion of anthropology, culture’s discipline of origin. This study examines the manner in which culture is conceptualized within the textual materials of transnational business in relation to anthropology, through the examination of transnational business guidebooks, corporate policy handbooks of multinational corporations, and interviews with applied and non-applied anthropology professors at the University of Florida. The results suggest that transnational business attempts to simplify the complexities of culture into a set of distinguishable characteristics and finite categories of difference in order to produce easy-to-understand generalizations about culture across borders. Anthropological understandings of culture are broader, more localized and less prone to generalizations. Anthropology has the potential to facilitate transnational business interactions and thus, avoid corporate failures simply based on cultural difference.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Culture is a highly contested conception within and outside of the discipline of anthropology. Since its inception in the late 19th century as a product of colonial conquest, the concept has evolved and changed considerably. E.B. Tylor’s formulation of the term “culture” initiated an era of evolutionism, in which to be “cultured” was to be civilized, with stages of evolution placing savages at the bottom of a hierarchy of civilizations, barbarians in the middle and finally civilized, Europeans at the top. Boasian anthropology reconfigured this inherently racist, Eurocentric conception of culture at the turn of the century, promoting the idea of cultural relativism--that culture was equally available to all people, and was justifiable according to their own understandings of life. Additionally, culture was no longer conceived of a singular or autonomously acting force; culture was now in the plural, a product of social interaction and the historical context of a particular setting, and not simply a hierarchy of evolutionary stages.

Twentieth century anthropologists, starting with Bronislaw Malinowski’s psychological functionalism and A. R. Radcliffe-Brown’s structural-functionalism, and narrowed the conceptual focus of culture to a normative conception of acts and behaviors; however, Radcliffe-Brown envisioned culture as a product of group needs while Malinowski, heavily influenced by psychological understandings of personality, situated culture as a response to individual needs. Radcliffe-Brown’s small group emphasis was expanded by Ruth Benedict, who introduced the notion of large group needs at a national level. Malinowski’s individualist conception influenced subsequent understandings of culture, including “culture as personality” studies, heralded by Claude Levi –Strauss’s structuralism and Clifford Geertz’s symbolic anthropology. Levi-Strauss emphasized the role of individual mental structures in unconsciously processing and maintaining social organization while Geertz situated culture within a system of meanings and symbols,
intuitively controlling individual but also group behaviors and action. Benedict’s conceptual emphasis of culture as national culture forms the basis of current theoretical conceptions of culture in neighboring social sciences. In fact, anthropology has been experiencing a period of hypersensitivity to the use of culture in academic discourse, arguing that its operationalization in anthropology “constructs, produces and maintains” cultural difference (Eisenhart, 2001: 209).

By contrast, culture has been enthusiastically adopted by sociology and psychology. These disciplines have changed the conceptual landscape of culture outside anthropology, now no longer conceived of as a product of group interactions, locality and holism. Sociological theory has embraced culture as a set of variables interacting with standard sociological concepts, namely class, ethnicity, gender, and education, among others. Psychology has influenced anthropology more directly, but maintains a narrow understanding of culture as a purely cognitive, automatic mechanism by which individuals interact with their environment. The purpose of this study is not a comparative examination of methodologies within the social sciences; the objective is to explore how culture is conceived outside the realm of academia, in a domain concerned with the practical application of the idea of culture, rather than its theoretical elaboration, namely, transnational business.

The role of culture in transnational business has become much more salient in recent years, with the increased role of smaller players in international economic markets, and the overall impacts of globalization in changing the nature of interacting with business partners overseas. As a result, transnational corporate interactions have often met with disastrous results simply because of misunderstandings or insensitivities toward cultural difference. Millions of dollars have been subsequently lost as a result of these potentially avoidable mistakes. The purpose of this study is to examine the role of culture as it is conceived of within transnational business; exploring its
theoretical origins and its practical understandings of the concept in order to determine how it is operationalized within transnational business interactions and how these conceptions may contribute to blunders of transnational corporate interactions.

International business has historically relied upon sociological and psychological conceptions of culture to form its understanding of social differences between countries and peoples. Particular emphasis has been placed on the theories of psychologist Geert Hofstede, categorizing culture as a “software of the mind” and embracing his ideas regarding the dimensions of culture, especially his classifications of observed characteristics within finite categories, including individualism, collectivism, informality, and others (Hofstede, 1980:22). Harry Triandis, also a psychologist, elaborated on the idea of culture as a set of easily distinguishable categories. Triandis refers to these categories as “cultural syndromes,” and he approaches cultural characteristics as a set of binary relationships, including individualism versus collectivism and masculinity versus femininity, among others (Triandis, 1996: 409).

With this backdrop in mind, in this study I examine, the ways in which international business deploys the concept of “culture” and the understandings of culture developed by Hofstede, Triandis and others. Specifically, I examine corporate guidebooks and corporate policy manuals with the purpose of analyzing how written materials advising transnational business administrative personnel explicitly and implicitly present culture. I examine guidebooks relating to transnational corporate interactions, directing management personnel in navigating through the ‘obstacles’ of transnational communication, negotiation, and management. Five corporate policy handbooks from a variety of companies are also examined for content related to guidelines pertaining to engagement with cultural difference. Specifically, I want to understand the influence of the work produced by Hofstede and Triandis and their followers, as well as understand the
perceptions of culture inscribed in corporate documents. To this end, I have developed four broad categories into which I group the perceptions of culture that I have identified. I label these categories: (1) Culture as Mechanism of the Economy; (2) Culture as an Institution; (3) Culture as Difference; and (4) Culture as Cognition.

In addition to an examination of the substantive content of the documents, I have also conducted a systematic analysis of the structure and organization of the content, and I have found that perceptions of culture are also presented and discernible in the structure and organization of these texts. In order to demonstrate this complementary presence of the specific forms of meaning attributed to culture and used as a basis for directing the behavior of personnel and the conduct of cross cultural commercial transactions, I have developed an additional set of analytical categories to coordinate my analysis of the structural and organizational elements. I label these categories (1) Symptoms of Culture; (2) Diagnoses of Culture; (3) Syndromes of Culture; and (4) Treatments of Culture. These categories are described in detail below.

One of my basic premises is that anthropology enjoys a relatively weak influence within the realm of transnational business. In order to examine the veracity of this premise, and in order to supplement the results of my research in the business community, I also undertook research among practicing anthropologists at the University of Florida, to better understand the perspectives of active professional anthropologists regarding the relevance and potential of anthropological contributions to the idea of culture. I interviewed ten anthropologists, both applied and non-applied researchers, and in Chapter 4, I examine the content of these interviews, with a view to analysis of the ways that anthropologists present themselves, their perceptions of the discipline, and the role and meaning of “culture” as it shapes or influences human behavior.
One of the key ideas that these interviews illuminate is the continued belief among my interviewees in the idea of anthropology as an authority over the concept of culture. These interviewees consistently articulated this idea, and maintained that it applies both within and outside the discipline. In order to systematically interrogate the data elicited through these interviews, I developed two content categories that I use to organize and describe the relationships between anthropology and culture articulated by interviewees. These categories are (1) Anthropology as Ambassador of Culture; and (2) Culture as Social Knowledge. I then consider the intersections of these materials with the business community and offer some modest suggestions for ways in which closer and meaningful relationships between anthropologists and transnational business actors can be developed, elaborated, and improved.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

CONCEPTIONS OF CULTURE

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the conceptual development of the term culture. Culture as a concept has been a unifying element in the discipline of anthropology, although practitioners have consistently contested the meanings and applications of the term since it was first proposed as a distinguishing research interest, and presently, there is still relatively little uniformity of meaning either within anthropology, or within related academic discourses. This chapter will attempt to contextualize these conceptions of culture temporally and across disciplines in order to assess how conceptual differences affect the treatment and application of culture. This will be achieved by (1) discussing the theoretical development of culture as it is organized historically and conceptually within anthropology and subsequently in other disciplines and (2) examining the intersection of theory and applicability of culture in an applied realm, with special emphasis on its role within business interactions.

THE RISE OF ANTHROPOLOGY

It is highly important to recognize that cultural anthropology emerged in the nineteenth century as part of an attempt to create a new and comprehensive “science of man”. This subfield emerged out of a crisis of the eighteenth century, a crisis that continued into the nineteenth century and is still with us now in the twentieth century. The Industrial Revolution had brought with it changes in human behavior so unprecedented and drastic they had been described by at least one scholar as qualitative rather than quantitative. “The concept of culture emerged [...] as a way of understanding human variation, and as a tool for the examination of human nature itself” (Langness, 1974: 10).
The “crisis” Langness alludes to is the conflict of race. “By the nineteenth century the concept of race became more and more important and was increasingly invoked to explain the differences that were being constantly discovered.” (Langness, 1974: 10). These “discoveries” emerged out of an era of increased curiosity over the dark-skinned, “animal-like” humans European, and later American explorers, scientists and missionaries, encountered through their travels in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This led to an era of Euro-American colonialism, in the nineteenth century, in which “white rule with its color inequality [formed the] context in which anthropology originated and flourished” (Kuklick, 2008:327). This colonial framework often limited the function of Euro-American anthropology as a mechanism for justifying racist colonial policy and notions of Euro-American racial superiority. While some anthropologists of the era attempted to demonstrate the detrimental effects of colonial rule on native populations, these reports were often ignored by colonial regimes (Kuklick, 2008: 328). As Langness suggests, “the concept of culture emerged against this background, in part at least, as an alternative to race for explaining differences in behavior” (Langness, 1974: 10). The 19th century was categorized by major overall changes in the social, political, and economic practices.

With this as a backdrop, we can begin to understand the development of culture as a concept within anthropological theory. Its development occurred in a series of loosely defined theoretical phases of anthropological development on culture: evolutionism, historicalism and diffusion, functionalism, structuralism and post-structuralism, cultural idealism/cultural materialism, political economy, and interpretivism (or hermeneutics) While these stages are by no means rigid and/or temporally sequential, they present a useful outline of the important theoretical phases of the culture concept and the notable scholars associated with them.
EVOLUTIONISM

Prior to E.B. Tylor’s formulation of the term ‘culture’ in 1871, Lewis Henry Morgan was setting the foundations for what we have come to regard as the era of evolutionism, the beginnings of the “science of man” (Langness, 1974:16).

The scheme...places people on a continuum, [...] a scale of values with ‘savages’ on the bottom, ‘barbarians’ somewhat higher, and ‘civilized’ people at the very top. As it was seen in the context of evolution, it implies a time dimension as well as a scale of value—‘savage’ changed over time into ‘barbarians’ that eventually might attain the ‘higher’ stage of ‘civilization’ (Langness,1974: 17).

Morgan’s formulation of evolution was developed as method of taxonomizing mankind according to the basis of subsistence, or technoeconomics; i.e., fishing subsistence preceded the invention of the bow and arrow, distinguishing the “Lower Status of Savagery” with that of the “Upper Status of Savagery” and so on. Culture was thus determined primarily as an autonomous, influential agent associated with objects and practices, (White,1959: 227). This early conception of culture was very limited in its emphasis on the material elements of cultural difference which ensured survival.

By the time Tylor’s Primitive Culture was published in 1871, and his formal identification of ‘culture’ (as synonymous with civilization) had been developed, Morgan’s subsistence-based evolutionism had evolved into a “progressive social evolutionism” by grouping culture through stages or degrees of progress (Stocking, 1966: 869). “While [Tylor] argued that European culture was a natural evolutionary growth out of primitive germs, he nevertheless still saw human groups in hierarchical terms, differing widely in the degree to which they were ‘cultured’” (Stocking, 1966: 869). For example, Tylor claimed there to be a hierarchy in religious understanding, and while he proclaimed there to be “no contemporary men without religion,” he conceded to believe that there were conceptual differences regarding religion that differentiated savages from civilized
men (quoted in Langness, 1974: 23). He formulated a “ubiquitous evolutionary or hierarchical pattern” from the existence of nonreligious conditions to the belief in the existence of souls, from belief in phantoms to individual guardian species, belief in deities then polytheism, and ultimately the belief in one supreme deity (Langness, 1974: 24). This hierarchical understanding of culture argued that observations of peoples exhibiting traits inferior to European tradition were functioning at lower stages of a parallel evolutionary path. Parallel evolution suggested that “if a particular pattern existed in two or more places it could be explained as a parallel development stemming from a common cause and process” (Langness, 1974: 49).

Tylor and fellow scholars of the time understood culture to be singular, absolute, and comprehended “through racial terms” (Stocking, 1966: 869). Herbert Spence, a prominent sociologist and contemporary of Tylor and Morgan, categorized savages as “improvident, impulsive, incapable of abstraction, governed by a fixity of habit merging imperceptibility over time into racial instinct” (Stocking, 1966: 870). Culture was considered synonymous with civilization, “one grand tradition” of which different people were born at different evolutionary levels (Langness, 1974: 24). “The concern of the era was to explain the process of becoming civilized—they were primarily interested in how they, Europeans, arrived at their ‘higher’, ‘civilized’ state” (Langness, 1974: 24). This conception allowed Euro-American colonial governments to relegate colonized groups to positions of inferiority.

**HISTORICISM/RELATIVISM**

The onset of the twentieth century brought about significant contributions to the culture concept by a number of anthropologists, namely Franz Boas and Alfred Kroeber. This time period was categorized by a theoretical clash between evolutionists and “historical particularists” and “cultural relativists”. This binary title describes two aspects of what was to be known as
“Boasian” anthropology. Historical particularism emphasized Boaz’s insistence on making anthropology historically conscious in order to avoid invalid or exaggerated generalizations about groups or societies. Relativism rejected the idea of racial superiority merely due to difference. Boas’s trip to Baffinland in 1883 provided the foundations for his strongly relativistic and anti-absolutistic ideas regarding cultural experience:

Is it not a beautiful custom that these ‘savages’ suffer all deprivation in common, but in happy times when someone has brought back booty from the hunt, all join in eating and drinking. I often ask myself what advantages our ‘good society’ possesses over that of the ‘savages.’ The more I see their customs, the more I realize that we have no right to look down on them. Where amongst our people would you find such true hospitality? Here, without the least complaint people are willing to perform every task demanded of them. […] As a thinking person, for me the most important result of this trip lies in the strengthening of my point of view that the idea of a ‘cultured’ individual is merely relative…[emphasis in original] (Langness, 1979: 47).

Boasian anthropology “led the way to the destruction of the commonly held beliefs in racial superiority and racial determinism that were so much a part of anthropology before him” (Langness, 1974: 47).

While evolutionists proposed that societies inherited a hierarchy of values, historicists and relativists advocated that “every society seeks in some ways, and in some measure finds value” (Stocking, 1966: 866). Thus, relativists suggested that culture did not act autonomously upon a group; it was created within a group and was not limited only to “civilized” groups but was acquired by all. More importantly, historicists and relativists promoted the idea of culture as plural, not a parallel evolutionary tradition in which progress inherently converged toward Euro-American culture. The notion of cultures suggested that all men were equally cultured, “a movement away from evolution of culture; instead of hierarchy—multiplicity of converging and diverging lines which is difficult to bring under one system” (Stocking, 1966: 871).
This is akin to the idea argued by W.H.R Rivers, the father of diffusionism, who suggested that the proper subject of investigation for anthropology was diffusion: “the process by which one culture acquires things from another. Man was by nature uninventive and most things must have been invented only once” (Langness, 1974:47). This theory strongly questioned the relevance of independently invented culture, which was a critical component of evolutionism. Diffusion assumed a more collective sharing and distribution of cultural value systems and materials across societies while independent inventiveness contended that an item or understanding of culture found in two places were independently invented for the same reasons in each place (Langness, 1974: 50). With diffusion came interest in the importance of migration, studied by F. Ratzel, and culture areas (“aggregations of cultural material”), surveyed by Otis Mason and John Wesley Powell (Langness, 1974: 52).

Boas and his students tended to reject contemporary studies on primitive mental capacity performed by psychologists and anthropologists during the last part of the nineteenth century, including the Torres Straits Studies of 1898, conducted by A.C. Haddon, William McDougall, W.H.R. Rivers and C.S. Meyers, in which native populations were tested to determine levels of sensory abilities. The results obtained were inconclusive but many of the scientists of the study used scant, circumstantial evidence to confirm beliefs about primitive mental capacity. Boas suggested that “descriptive psychological evidence was not ‘a safe guide,’ for the observer was ‘always liable to interpret as racial character what is only an effect of social surroundings’” (Stocking, 1966: 875). This view suggested that while all races had the same mental capacities upon birth, “apparent primitive deficiencies in the ‘logical interpretations of perceptions’ were the result of the ‘character of the ideas with which the new perception associated itself’” (Stocking,
Knowledge and education due to social surroundings determined difference in racial perception, not inherent inferiority.

The Boasian tradition promoted an anthropology based on thorough fact-finding and thus rejected many deeply racist, absolutist generalizations based on their scant factual evidence. Culture was no longer understood to be produced in the singular, nor was it independently invented but diffused across societies through social interaction. Most importantly, cultures were relative and therefore it was important to understand the particularities of a culture through its vast history in order to assume any interpretive authority. While this insistence of fact-acquisition and lengthy data collection guided anthropology forward into a more conscious discipline, it served as reaction to evolutionism that lacked its own theoretical conclusivity, and was challenged by subsequent generations of anthropologists, namely the structuralists and functionalists.

**STRUCTURALISM/FUNCTIONALISM**

That the method of radical empiricism (historical particularism) should have led, too, to scientific agnosticism, is not at all surprising.

Cultural phenomena are indeed complex, as Boas rightly cautioned; but this method could hardly have decreased the impression of their complexity […] But having decided to collect all the ethnographic facts and to collect them as objectively as possible— that is, without explicit theory—anthropology was confronted with an enormous corpus of unstructured ethnographic material. And as in any other unstructured situation, the resultant perception was one of enormous complexity. (Spiro, 1972: 577)

Structuralism and functionalism, or more precisely structural-functionalism and pure functionalism, both operated on a greater insistence on theory making and scientific inquiry. Structural-functionalism, heralded by A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, rejected the idea of culture because it was impossible to study.
Is a science of culture really possible? Boas says it is not. I agree. You cannot have a science of culture. You can study culture only as a characteristic of a social system. Therefore, if you are going to have a science, it must be a science of social systems” (Radcliffe-Brown, 1957:106).

Radcliffe-Brown compared society to the human body, composed of a number of systems performing specific activities; thus, he understood “human society [to] constitute a similar system with its distinctive structure and function” (Langness, 1974:70). While Radcliffe-Brown relegated culture to a secondary position within social systems, he did manage to define it in a number of ways: (1) a set of rules “fitting human beings together into a social system,” (2) “common symbols and common meanings attached to them,” and (3) “a certain common set of ways of feeling and certain common set of ways of thinking” (Radcliffe-Brown, 1957: 102). Culture is understood as a normative conception of acts and behaviors regulated by social systems to which it is a component.

Pure functionalism, championed by Bronislaw Malinowski, captured many of Radcliffe-Brown’s ideas on culture but also went beyond it.

The basic building blocks for Malinowski were seven basic human ‘needs’. Culture was seen as the instrument through which these needs were met. Malinowski, however, insisted that these were individual, not group needs, and it was here that the greatest rift occurred between structural-functionism and Malinowski’s more comprehensive, more psychological functionalism” (Langness, 1974:76).

Malinowski insisted on accepting and studying culture through the emotional, intellectual, as well as biological “reality” of an individual, namely reproduction, nutrition, bodily comforts, safety, relaxation, movement, and growth. These basic “biological and derived needs” were measured by how they were satisfied as components of culture (Langness, 1974:77).

Radcliffe-Brown rejected the influence of biology or psychology in anthropology as inappropriate to the study of social systems. Both scholars believed anthropology should be more
scientific, less a historical narrative and more a substantive, theoretical understanding of systems. While both rejected the idea of evolutionism on the whole, they could not escape their inherently racist inferiority-superiority conceptions of Euro-American dominance in Africa and South America. Additionally, both structuralism and functionalism routinely ignored Boasian insistence on history for the purpose of contextualizing cultural understandings---thus, culture was perceived only in the present and could not account for change, rendering its inquiry insufficient and inaccurate.

**IDEALISM/MATERIALISM**

Cultural idealism or culture-and-personality studies, and cultural materialism developed alongside structuralist-functionalism in Europe during the 1920s and 1930s. Cultural idealism encompassed the work of a wide number of notable scholars, including John Whiting, Melford Spiro, Claude Levi-Strauss and Clifford Geertz. They “share[d] an interest in psychological phenomena and they tend[ed] to view culture in mental and symbolic terms” (Langness, 1974: 85). The idealist camp took on many of the same ideas espoused by Malinowski’s pure functionalism, especially in its emphasis on the psychological—the individual’s relationship to their environment. Cultural materialism, championed by Marvin Harris, was anti-psychological, and “tended to define culture strictly in terms of overt, observable behavior patterns, and they share[d] the belief that technoenvironmental factors are primary and causal” (Langness, 1974:85). It rejected the importance of mental processes and ideas over tangible and behavioral expressions of culture.

Culture-and-personality studies marks a turn in culture theory as the foundations of more recent conceptions of culture. C.G. Seligman was one of the first anthropologists to explore the importance of personality (extrovert versus introvert) in relation to the study of anthropology. “Europeans, he felt, were predominantly extrovert whereas Hindus were introvert” (Langness,
This connection between national or regional culture and generalities regarding business interactions, as I will discuss later in the chapter, appears to originate from this collaboration between the psychology of the individual and the cultural characteristics of a group.

Alfred Kroeber defined culture as “superorganic”; “an entity existing independently in its own right and independently of individual men and women” (Langness, 1974: 89). This conception of culture was critiqued famously by Edward Sapir, Kroeber’s contemporary, and one of the founding theoreticians of culture-and-personality studies. While Kroeber insisted that the group was more important than the individual, Sapir suggested that:

> Anthropology might also focus on persons and see culture in its ‘true locus,’ namely, ‘in the interactions of specific individuals and, on the subjective side, in the world of meanings which each one of these individuals may unconsciously abstract himself from his participations from these interactions’—in much the same way as psychiatry focuses on a whole individual and observes him in his world of social relationships” (Langness, 1974: 90).

This conception was unprecedented in moving the discipline’s understanding of culture more and more within the realm of mental processes. Sapir furthered this idea of culture through the Whorf-Sapir Hypothesis in which he postulated that “the language a person internalizes affects the way he perceives the world around him” and thus suggests that other elements of culture are equally likely to become internalized and subsequently affect perception (Langness, 1974: 91). Sapir was also useful in articulating a distinction between “man’s entire material and social heritage” and culture as “those general attitudes, views of life, and specific manifestations of civilization that give a particular people its distinctive place in the world” (Langness, 1974: 91). This was to be developed by Ruth Benedict, a fellow cultural idealist, who explored the idea of national culture. Benedict “wished to transfer interpretive procedure” to the study of small-scale to large-scale societies (Silverman, 1981: 152). “Differences in values and attitudes were expected to occur
within and between sectors of the same society, but underlying, generally shared understandings were also thought to typify the society at large” (Silverman, 1981:152). Silverman suggests that “her view of the values of a culture as underlying its surface manifestations, resonating in different institutions and providing thematic unity to overt diversity” is both criticized and defended equally within the discipline (Silverman, 1981: 152)

**CULTURE AND PERSONALITY**

Culture-and-personality, most importantly, advocated for the use of “culture as an independent variable (the one that is manipulated in an experiment) to explain one or more dependent (personality) variables (the one whose behavior is assumed to follow from the manipulation of the other)” (Langness, 1974: 99, emphasis in original). Thus, the purpose was to understand how culture affected the personality/mental processes of an individual as a member of a group.

Structuralism, not to be confused with Radcliffe-Brown’s structuralist-functionalism, was heralded by Claude Levi-Strauss, who converged with the cultural idealism with his emphasis on psychology. He suggested that individuals utilize “structures of the mind” which function unconsciously to maintain social organization and fulfill psychological needs.

Cultural materialists held quite a different view. John Whitting straddled the ideologies of both camps in which he “embrac[ed] both cognitive and overt behavioral factors” but eliminated material artifacts of culture, which would have been included by cultural materialists (Langness, 1974:97). Marvin Harris and the cultural materialists discounted psychology as a viable technique for studying culture, suggesting that outside the realm of the material, one could not viably examine mental processes of others without relying “heavily upon psychologically derived terms [such as] ‘fear’, ‘evasion’, [and] ‘feeling’” which produces an etic perspective (Langness, 1974:
Harris suggested removing any variables associated with perception, and assuming that the environment functions on its own to determine behavioral patterns of human being based on their interactions with materials.

**SYMBOLIC ANTHROPOLOGY**

Symbolic anthropology, heralded by the likes of Clifford Geertz, David Schneider, and Victor Turner, developed the idea of culture as a system of symbols.

A system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, persuasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic (Geertz, 1966:16).

Semiotics, the study of symbols and signs, dominated the 1960s and 1970s, particularly with Clifford Geertz’s publication *Interpretation of Cultures* in 1973. In that text, Geertz discusses the relevance of behavior as one mechanism by which cultural forms find articulation. Using Max Weber’s “webs of significance” Geertz is one of the first scholars to situate culture within a vast network of symbols, understood through subjective and objective means (1973:23). He denounces previous attempts at enclosing culture within a purely cognitive framework of understanding; the idea that “culture consists of a mental phenomena which can be analyzed by normal methods similar to those of mathematics and logic’ is as destructive of an effective use of the concept as are the behaviorist and idealist fallacies to which it is a misdrawn correction” (Geertz, 1973:29).

As Sewell articulately notes:

The point of conceptualizing culture as a system of symbols and meanings is to disentangle, for the purpose of analysis, the semiotic influences on action from the other sorts of influences-demographic, geographical, biological, technological, economic, and so on-that they are necessarily mixed with any concrete sequence of behavior (1999:24).
Geertz and his fellow symbolic anthropologists dealt with many of the symbols and values of the unconscious, associated with Freud, Jung, and Levi-Strauss, thus taking a bit from the psychologically focused structuralism. Turner laid out the idea that the “meaning of symbols is entirely understood through observation and questioning. This approach combine[d] comparisons of emic and etic descriptions—observations of overt behavior with statements pertaining to ‘inner states’ and meanings” (Langness, 1974: 119). Of particular importance to current conceptions of culture, especially those regarding national culture, as posited by Ruth Benedict, is David Schneider’s idea of national culture:

A particular culture, American culture for instance, consists of a system of units (or parts) which are defined in certain ways and which are differentiated according to certain criteria. These units define the world or the universe, the way the things should be and do. I have used the term ‘unit’ as the widest, most general, all-purpose word possible in this context. A unit in a particular culture is simply anything that is culturally defined as distinguishing as an entity. It may be a person, place, thing, feeling, state of affairs, sense of foreboding, fantasy, hallucination, hope or idea. In American culture such units as uncle, town, blue (depressed), a mess, a hunch, the idea of progress, home, and art are cultural units (Langness, 1974: 121).

**MULTI-DISCIPLINARY CULTURAL STUDIES**

By the mid 1980s, cultural studies appeared to be sweeping over other disciplines in the social sciences. Political science also began to assume more interest in cultural questions, Sewell notes, “due to recent prominence of religious fundamentalism, nationalism and ethnicity which look[ed] like the most potent sources of political conflict in the contemporary world” (1999: 27). Practice, as conceived by Pierre Bourdieu, became important as a tool for understanding outside the discipline of anthropology (Sewell, 1999: 27). Sociology embraced Ann Swinder’s “tool kit” composed of “strategies of action”, a segmented amount of knowledge used at any given time to function within a social structure (Sewell 1999: 27). This functioned out of the sociological
methodology of culture as a set of variables, and was therefore easier to compartmentalize as “test” based on its defined set of characteristics. Sewell critiqued this understanding by suggesting that “culture has a semiotic structuring principle that is different from political, economic, geographical structuring principles that are uniform in practice—even if action were almost entirely determined by overwhelming disparities in economic resources, those disparities would still have to be rendered meaningful in action according to a semiotic logic” (1999: 28). This understanding of cultural processes has become instrumental in influencing current conceptions of culture within contemporary sociology and business, which will be discussed below.

Culture is not a practice; nor is it simply the descriptive sum of “mores and folkways” of societies […] ‘culture’ is those patterns of organization, those characteristic forms of human energy which can be discovered as revealing themselves…within or underlying all social practices…The purpose of the analysis [of culture] is to grasp how the interactions between all these practices and patterns are lived and experienced as a whole in any particular [historical] period (Eisenhart, 2001: 213).

Culture by the end of the twentieth century was understood within anthropology as a complex series of interrelated behavior that must be examined in order to find meaning. And while anthropology held the most influence over culture theory at the time, the late 1970s began to produce a rise in sociological thought relating to culture theory. The sociology of culture applied “standard sociological methods to studies of production/marketing of cultural artifacts, music, art, drama, and literature” (Sewell, 1999: 53). Methodologically, sociology has constructed culture as a set of variables, “whose influence on behavior can be rigorously compared to that of such standard sociological variables as class, ethnicity, gender, level of education, economic interest, and the like” in order to give it a sense of “causal efficacy” (Sewell, 1999: 53). Sewell strongly critiques sociological conceptions of culture as positioned in opposition to structure; he suggests that it is impossible to link agency and culture, while contrasting it to structure: “particulars of the
relationship between structure and agency may differ in cultural and economic processes, but assigning either the economic or the cultural exclusively to structure or agency is a serious category error” (Sewell, 1999: 54).

The 1980s and 1990s for anthropology was a period of hypersensitivity to mischaracterizations of culture as representative of essentialism, exoticism and stereotyping; many anthropologists avoided use of the word culture within their own discourses.

Anthropology’s avowed goal may be to ‘the study of man’…[but it] has been and continues to be primarily the study of the non-Western [culturally different] other by the Western [culturally mainstream] self, even if in its new guise it seeks explicitly to give voice to the Other, either textually or through an explication of the fieldwork encounter… Culture is the essential tool for making other. As a professional discourse that elaborates on the meaning of culture in order to account for, explain, and understand cultural difference, anthropology also helps construct, produce, and maintain it. Anthropological discourse gives cultural difference…the air of the self-evident (Eisenhart, 2001: 224).

John Brightham refers to this treatment as “lexical avoidance behavior”, by “placing culture in quotations or refusing to use the term at all” (Sewell, 1999: 55). Anthropology’s disciplinary authority over culture has been called into question in recent years; this lexical crisis of conception has, in some ways, lead to a sizable weakening of anthropology’s sense of ownership over the concept. As a marker of anthropology’s disciplinary identity, efforts to continually question the relevance and appropriateness of culture has rendered the term unapproachable to those outside the discipline, favoring clearer and more universally agreed upon conceptions like those produced through sociological and psychological models.

CULTURE AND GLOBALIZATION

Culture theory is the product of a long history of globalization. Globalization can be defined as “the intensification of world-wide social relations which link distant localities in such a way
that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa” Kearney, 1995: 549). Access to economic resources of “unknown” worlds has remained the primary objective over centuries, once for colonial conquest and now for economic and political domination overseas. “Globalization mediated by migration, commerce, communication technology, finance and tourism entails a reorganization of the bipolar imagery of space and time of a modern world view” (Kearney, 1995: 551). While the objective now is not necessarily to situate culture as a mechanism for justifying racial inferiority in order to dominate local resources, culture still serves as a means through which international corporate actors must navigate in order to achieve access to transnational markets. International business is tremendously affected by the competitive international market structure of contemporary globalization, as transnational corporate negotiations, contracts and partnerships are being formed every day.

Culture theory within the field of international business has been heavily influenced by a psychological take on culture theory (Sewell, 1999: 47). Some of the most prominent names of the field include Hofstede, Triandis, Franke, Bond, and Hall—all of whom hail from psychology. Culture is perceived as autonomous, basic, and somehow affecting the “behavior of all members of the culture group equally” (Weisinger and Salipante, 2000, 381). Meschi and Rogers (1994) articulated the significance of national culture on the ability to be socially effective within corporate settings. Current cross-cultural studies and trainings within the field allegedly investigate levels of corporate effectiveness through “cognitive, attitudinal, personality and behavioral characteristics at an individual and interpersonal level” (Weisinger and Salipante, 2000, 381). These studies assume that studying corporate interaction on a personal level will fully reflect conceptions of national culture across the board. The purpose of this approach is not simply to essentialize culture or lesson its inherent value within business---this approach allows it
to function as a comparative tool. As a result, while some broadly understood notions of national culture have served to illuminate “hidden cultural assumptions into behavior in cross-cultural settings…it [has] ignored other important factors affecting behavior and effectiveness” (Weisinger & Salipante, 2000: 381).

CONCLUSION
The purpose of situating culture within its many frameworks of understanding is to demonstrate the complexity and multi-faceted nature of its conceptions. None of the social sciences determined concrete conceptions of the topic, nor was there very much cross-disciplinary evaluation of the topic in order to create a more cohesive definition. By contextualizing culture within anthropology, I was attempting to demonstrate its evolutionary history as a conception born out of globalization, how much and how little it has changed within the discipline most self-identified with the study of culture, and how its own authority has been challenged by competing disciplines.
A. DEFINING THE VARIABLE

Anthropology has historically been the primary discipline that has shaped the analytical basis for conceptions of culture. It self-identifies as an authority in observing how the concept is applied elsewhere, however one of the objectives of this study is to examine how anthropology has been relegated to a secondary position behind sociology and psychology in addressing issues of culture in transnational business. Transnational business is an applied setting in which business personnel encounter transnational partners and employees that transnational business identifies as culturally different. I have chosen to focus on the analysis of cultural conceptions through content analysis of audio transcription data, transnational business guidebooks, and corporate policy handbooks.

Content analysis has been defined as “a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding” (Stemler, 2001, 2). It allows researchers to filter relatively large amounts of a data in a systematic fashion, which “allows us to discover or describe the focus of individual, group, institutional, or social attention” (Weber, 1990). Content analysis is useful as a tool for examining trends and patterns observed in non-literary textual material as well as verbal information, and thus, is an appropriate analytical tool for an anthropological analysis of textual and verbal information. Content analysis can not only help summarize the formal content of written material; it can also describe the attitudes or perceptions of the author of that material (USGAO, 1996).

In order to conduct content analysis, the researcher must follow a series of steps:

1) Defining the variables
2) Selecting material for analysis
3) Defining the recording units
4) Developing an analysis plan

These steps (USGAO, 1996) address issues, perception, motivation, intent, context, as well as limitations associated with collecting data, and have been used to guide the analysis from the onset. Following these tenets, a systematic classification process has been employed, in which (1) culture has been determined as the primary variable to be analyzed, (2) the interviews, guidebooks and manuals have been selected for analysis based on random sampling, (3) textual material has been coded to create categorical variables reflecting the primary unit of culture, and (4) these variables are synthesized into content categories to be analyzed (USGAO, 1996).

B. SELECTING MATERIAL FOR ANALYSIS

B.1 Audio Transcription Data

Before understanding how culture is conceived of in a transnational business context, it is important to contextualize culture as it is understood by practicing applied and non-applied anthropologists. The literature review in Chapter 2 addresses the theoretical principles of culture as it evolved within anthropology and how it was subsequently integrated into the analytical repertoires of neighboring social sciences, namely sociology, psychology and economics. This discussion highlights the general theoretical understanding of the concept of culture in the discipline of anthropology. However, it is also useful to identify the particular ways in which culture is conceived of by practitioners, both within and outside the confines of the academy.

Conceptions of culture by practicing anthropologists provide a practical, real-world understanding of the conception, forming a useful baseline from which to examine how culture is conceived of in transnational business. I sought out anthropologists who work at the University of Florida. I selected fourteen anthropologists based on an examination of research interests and
bibliographic information found on their personal websites, with particular emphasis on whether or not they classified themselves as conducting applied work. Seven anthropologists were contacted who did not identify themselves as conducting applied research; seven were contacted that did identify themselves as conducting applied research. I made initial contact with each of these anthropologists through emails, in which I described my research and requested their participation. Of the fourteen emailed, seven agreed to participate in an interview, and of these seven, four explicitly identified their research as applied anthropology. The others did not identify their research as applied.

A standard list of ten questions was made for the applied anthropologists, questioning the role of anthropology as an applied science, how they were received outside the discipline, as well as questions regarding conceptions of culture in applied anthropology (Appendix 1.1). I focused my questioning on the practitioners conceptions of culture; how they conceived of applied anthropology, how they conceived of their own position as applied anthropologists, and how they believed the discipline of anthropology has been understood historically and contemporarily as a useful contributor to solving practical problems. A standard list of ten questions was compiled for non-applied anthropologists (see Appendix 1.2), regarding the historical role of anthropology, its present strengths and weakness as a discipline in the social sciences, its conceptions of culture within and outside anthropology, and the future of the discipline as a social science. The interview sessions were semi-structured; the formatted questions were supplemented with targeted questioning in order to get at particularly relevant aspects of the specific research conducted by the anthropologists. The questions examined the conceptions of culture and of anthropology held by this particular sample of practicing anthropologists, in order to understand how culture is conceived as a concept that helps us to understand particular groups of people, as well as how
anthropology is conceived as a mechanism by which to study culture and explain variations among human groups. This approach is useful for contextualizing anthropology and the study of culture, and the discipline’s potential to affect the value that international business entities interested in culture might attribute to the work of anthropologists.

B.2 Transnational Business Guidebooks

The most significant element of the research focuses on written material, primarily printed works dedicated to identifying and elucidating practical methods of addressing culture within transnational business. Transnational business guidebooks were chosen due to the fact that they target administrative personnel on issues such as transnational business behavior, communication and negotiation strategies. The purpose of selecting guidebooks over other sources of printed material was to observe how printed materials written administrative personnel, convey ideas of culture. Because administrative personnel are in relative positions of power, conceptions of culture within these guidebooks have the potential to influence how they approach the concept, and therefore how they operationalize it.

The ten guidebooks chosen for this research have been compiled through a process of representative sampling. A list of twenty guidebooks has been identified through a search of business journal databases in the University of Florida library holdings. Search results that addressed culture and business were examined to see what guidebooks were referenced. These guidebooks are regularly published general industry references that are updated on a regular basis. Twenty guidebooks were referenced and reviewed the most of a search of over thirty academic articles. The guidebooks were then numbered randomly, and every even number was chosen to compile the final list of ten. The data from these guidebooks is referenced hereafter as the “guidebook dataset”. These guidebooks appear in Table 3.1.
Table 3.1. List of Transnational Business Guidebooks used for this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guidebook Dataset</th>
<th>Guidebook</th>
<th>Brief Synopsis</th>
<th>Authors Credentials</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gannon, M., Newman., K., (2002). The Blackwell Handbook of Cross-Cultural Management. Blackwell Publishers.</td>
<td>Provides overview of the major theoretical perspectives and applications of cross-cultural management. The only guidebook to focus primarily on theoretical foundations for culture in transnational business</td>
<td>Gannon: Professor of Strategy and Cross-Cultural Management, College of Business Administration, California State University San Marcos, San Marcos, CA. Professor Gannon is the author or co-author of 80 articles and 14 books, and has also been a consultant to many companies and government agencies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Varner, I., Beamer, L., (1995). Intercultural Communication in the Global Workplace. Irwin, Inc.</td>
<td>Addresses issues of culture and communication within the context of international business. Clear and concise representation of how companies communicate and rely on “underlying cultural reasons for behavior” (Varner &amp; Beamer, 1995).</td>
<td>Varner: Director of the International Business Program, Prof of Department of Management and Quantitative Methods at Illinois State University; Ph,D, M.A and M.B.A. from University of Oklahoma. She has extensive international experience and has served on the International Committee on Association for Business Communication since 1980. Beamer: Professor of Business Administration at California State University at Los Angeles. She has worked as a full-time independent consultant; in the 1980s, she trained hundreds of Canadian professionals to work in China on behalf of the Canadian International Development Agency.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Earley, C., Gibson, C., (2002). Multinational Work Teams: A New Perspective. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates</td>
<td>Focus is to expand upon literature on multinational teams; the important purpose of this book is its application of culture within the first few chapters addressing theory and conception.</td>
<td>Earley: Professor of Organization Behavior at the London Business School. He is the author of five books and numerous articles and book chapters, and his most recent publications include Culture, Self-Identity, and Work (1993) and The Transplanted Executive: Managing in Different Cultures (1997).</td>
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<td>Mitchell, C. (2009). A Short Course in International Business Culture: Building Your International Business Through Cultural Awareness. World Trade Press. 2nd Edition.</td>
<td>Explores a less strictly sociological and psychological understanding of culture, looking at values, attitudes, rituals and traditions to see how communication styles differ across countries</td>
<td>Mitchell: News reporter for Rand Daily Mail in Johannesburg and served as the South African-based correspondent for UPI. He then became Moscow bureau Chief for UPI. He's currently the publication director for the conference board, a New York business research organization specializing in global economic forecasting and management issues. He is also the author of Passports Russia and South Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Title / Description</td>
<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Edition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carte, P., Fox, C., (2008).</td>
<td>Bridging the Culture Gap: A Practical Guide to International Business Communication.</td>
<td>Kogan Page Limited. 2nd Edition.</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marx, E., (2001)</td>
<td>Breaking Through Culture Shock: What You Need to Succeed in International Business.</td>
<td>Nicholas Brealey Publishing.</td>
<td>2nd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ghauri, P., (2003).</td>
<td>International Business Negotiations.</td>
<td>Pergamon Publishing. 2nd Ed</td>
<td>2nd</td>
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B.3 Corporate Policy Handbooks

Corporate Policy Handbooks provide an ideal representation of a company’s values, motivations and conceptions of business related topics, including the ways by which corporate actors wish internal and external parties to view their position on specific issues, such as culture. Thus, corporate policy handbooks are relevant in addressing conceptions of culture within transnational corporations. The ways in which transnational corporate actors operationalize culture are complex and difficult to determine with precision; nonetheless, we can understand how corporations ideally understand and conceive of culture, and therefore perhaps determine how they intend on operationalizing it in transnational business settings.

A corpus of policy handbooks was compiled through a process of sampling (see Table 3.2). Throughout the process of reviewing the literature on transnational business interactions, I compiled a list of the names of transnational corporations that were most frequently identified as operators of successful transnational business interactions. Of those on the list, I selected the top six: McDonalds, General Motors, Dow Chemical Company, Accenture, Nike, and Hewlett Packard, and I consulted their relevant policy documents. These corporations represent a range of transnational industries, including fast food, computer systems, management consulting, design and sportswear, auto, and chemical manufacturing. The purpose was to observe the conceptions of culture in a sample of significant actors with substantial impacts in different industries. The policy manuals of these corporations were examined through a process of content analysis, as described above.
Table 3.2. List of Corporate Policy Documents used for this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corporate Policy Documents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>McDonalds 2009 Corporate Responsibility Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Motors Diversity Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nike 2009 People and Culture Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dow Chemical Company Code of Business Conduct</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accenture Code of Business Ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hewett Packard Standard Business Contract</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
C. DEVELOPING AN ANALYSIS PLAN

Approaching conceptions of culture within international business requires a large scope, including a host of actors within business itself, in the academic discipline of international business (who set the foundations for theoretical conceptions of the term through written knowledge), anthropologists, and other academic practitioners, who serve as the principle operators of the concept. Due to the time and related constraints on completing this research, the breadth of this project is necessarily restricted, and the quantity of data I could extract from all sources is similarly circumscribed. However, the data elicited and the analysis that I was able to conduct on these data is intriguing and point to the potential that a longer, more sustained project could develop.

The main contribution of this project therefore lies in its heuristic value, and its signal that subsequent ethnographic research is necessary to more fully apprehend and suggest interventions for the improvement of transnational business practices as these coalesce around issues of “culture”. The scope was determined through an extensive reading of all the printed materials and the transcriptions of interviews. Based on these readings, I identified several structural and thematic patterns.

Within the guidebooks, culture was often introduced through a series of examples describing negative experiences associated with transnational business interaction; culture was then defined in one or many different ways, and then subsequently broken down into a number of bounded, dichotomous relationships that reduced the initially negative experience into specific categories. The sources followed a systematic unpacking of the concept, by engaging the target reader through familiar sensory experiences, regurgitating classifications for culture (through definitions which they noted as the products of well-recognized theoreticians of the concept), and
expounding on these classifications through set patterns of culturally determined behavior. The researcher was able to observe a mechanism by which culture was perceived through this treatment. This formed the foundations for a more detailed examination of the written material.

I determined a list of coding frames from the material. One of the primary methods of analyzing information through content analysis is through the process of coding, in which “words of the text are classified into much fewer content categories” (USGAO, 1996). By organizing key terms and ideas within categories, the trends can be determined in the data.

C.1. Analytical Tools for Guidebooks and Policy Manuals

Through an extensive analysis of the guidebooks and corporate policy manuals, I identified a list of over three hundred codes, consisting of words or phrases explicitly expressed in the material (see Appendix 1.3). The codes were examined and grouped based on patterns or repetitions of words, concepts or themes within the data. Two sets of code groups were identified; the Cultural Syndromes and Perceptions of Culture. Cultural Syndromes form a list of twenty-five bounded binaries which are essentially conceived of as conditions prompted by Perceptions of Culture. The relationship between Perceptions of Culture and Cultural Syndromes will become very important in the discussion of my results below in Chapter 4. Within the Perceptions of Culture code group, codes are either content or structure-oriented. Four categories were obtained within the content-oriented content category: culture as a mechanism of economics, culture as an institution, culture as cognition, and culture as difference. These content categories identify the basic conceptual understandings of culture within the data. I will discuss these content categories as analytical tools for expanding upon these thematic patterns (see Chapter 3).
Beyond these content-oriented conceptual themes, I also detected structure-oriented thematic patterns. The guidebooks and corporate policy manuals offered noticeably systematic structures in addressing culture. By examining the codes as well as re-examining the context in which these codes were taken, I developed an analysis of content based on its structure and presentation. Culture was approached in a systematic fashion, analogous to a standard medical diagnostic, in which symptoms are observed (shock, frustration and anxiety relating to foreign encounters), diagnosis is made (acknowledgement and development of culture as source of symptoms), classifications of these symptoms as conditions of culture (syndromes of culture), concluding with potential treatments associated with successfully minimizing or eliminating culture within international interactions. I provided a hierarchical model, clearly addressing the analytical tools being used in this study. This will be discussed further in Chapter 4, the Discussion section. (See Figure 1.1).

C.2 Analytical Tools: Audio Transcription Data

In order to supplement the results of my research of transnational business, I also undertook research among practicing anthropologists at the University of Florida, to better understand the perspectives of active professional anthropologists regarding the relevance and potential of anthropological contributions to the idea of culture. The data collected during the interview portion of the research was partially transcribed. I opted to partially transcribe the audio after I had reviewed it several times and found that only certain segments of my interviews really pertained to understanding anthropological conceptions of culture. I listened to the audio tracks several times in order to determine which passages to transcribe so that the occurrences of certain words, phrases and paragraphs could be analyzed. These transcribed codes were then grouped in the same fashion, as were the other written materials, through a systematic
examination of thematic patterns. Two content categories were subsequently identified: Culture as Social Knowledge and Anthropology: Ambassador of Culture. (See Figure 1.2).

In order to create this model, I looked primarily at language related to conceptions of culture as the analytical tool of anthropology, as well as self-perception of self-identified practitioners of anthropology (both applied and non-applied). I noticed trends in the data pertaining directly to anthropological conceptions of culture as relating only to a group; this was almost always referred to as a given. Additionally, there was an emphasis on meaning as a product of group function, and thus the formation of the first code group. Culture as Social Knowledge identifies the role of culture prescribed by anthropologists, as a means of understanding valuable social data of implicit and explicit social group dynamics. For the sake of continuity, the results will be set up in a format similar to that of the other written material; however the analytical scheme excludes code groups, and utilizes only content categories. The analytical complexities of the audio transcription data is more pointed than that of the guidebooks and corporate policy manuals.

Along with this discussion of culture, I recognized trends in the data relating to the active voice of the practitioner in referring to the discipline of anthropology itself and its relationship to culture as an object of analysis. Anthropology: Ambassador of Culture identifies the role of anthropology as a protective representative of culture, promoting a sense of ownership and duty towards the sponsorship of this concept. The following chapter will discuss the results of this study.
Figure 1.1. Hierarchical Flow Chart of analytical scheme. Content analysis produced a series of codes that were bounded into two groups of interacting code groups. (See Results Section).
Figure 1.2. Hierarchical Flow Chart of Written Transcription analytical scheme.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The results of my research are based on a content analysis of thematic patterns observed within audio transcription data, guidebooks on international business, and corporate policy manuals. Following the tenets of content analysis, I employed a systematic classification process in which: 1) culture was determined as the primary unit of analysis; 2) the audio transcriptions, guidebooks and manuals were selected for analysis based on random sampling (guidebooks) and representative sampling (audio transcriptions, manuals); 3) textual material was coded to create categorical variables reflecting the primary unit of culture; and 4) these variables were synthesized into code groups and content categories to be analyzed (USGAO, 1996).

A. CONCEPTUAL TOOLS USED BY BUSINESS

Based on my content analysis of the transnational business guidebooks and corporate policy manuals, I produced a pair of code groups which I call Cultural Syndromes and Perceptions of Culture. Taken together, these code groups reflect the patterns I observed in the data pertinent to the conceptual tools used by transnational corporate actors to discuss culture within these materials.

A.1 Cultural Syndromes

This code group identifies only data compiled from the guidebooks on international business. Please see Table 4.1
Table 4.1. Cultural Syndromes Frequency Table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Syndromes</th>
<th># of Times Used as Analytical Tool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. high-context vs. low-context</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. individualist vs. collectivist cultures</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. long vs short term orientation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. informal vs. formal cultures</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. rigid time vs. fluid time (polychronic vs. monochronic) cultures</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. emotionally expressive vs. emotionally reserved cultures</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. vertical vs horizontal cultures</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. high uncertainty avoidance vs. low uncertainty avoidance cultures</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. high vs. low power distance</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. high contact vs. low contact cultures</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. high vs low uncertainty avoidance</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. masculine vs feminine cultures</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. direct vs indirect language</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. tightness (less strict, precise--less tight; conformity-more tight)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. deal-focused vs. relationship focused cultures</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. active vs passive cultures</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. universalism vs particularism</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Diffuse vs specific cultures</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Ascription vs Achievement minded cultures</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows how many times each of the conceptual tools elaborated by Hofstede and Triandis was used by subsequent researchers to guide analysis of cultural difference.
A.2 Perceptions of Culture

This code group identifies data collected from both the guidebooks and the corporate policy manuals. The results collected in this code group are divided into two substantive categories: Content-oriented and Structure-oriented. These substantive categories were determined through a content analysis of all the materials, in which 300 words and phrases were compiled based on their conceptual relationship to culture. “Content-oriented” refers to the actual content referenced in the sources, illustrating implicit and explicit conceptions of culture through a direct examination of the words and phrases taken from all the guidebooks and policy manuals. “Structure-oriented” (only referring to the guidebooks) addresses the mechanisms by which these materials organize their discussions of culture, and how this organization might reflect their conceptions of culture.

A.2.a. Content-Oriented

The results demonstrated a series of four thematic patterns presented by the data as conceptions analytical approaches to culture: culture as mechanism of the economy, culture as an institution, culture as difference, culture as cognition. These groups were compiled through an extensive analysis of the content codes compiled through content analysis.

The table below does not provide a comprehensive list of all the codes in each category, but it shows a sampling of the type of words and phrases utilized by the guidebooks and policy manuals to address culture within the texts (See Appendix 1.3). As mentioned previously, these codes were not necessarily chosen only if they used the term culture; many of them were noted if they followed the same thematic pattern or expanded upon the conceptual treatment of culture in a distinctive way. For example, the culture as difference category includes several examples of culture as sameness, including “similarities that bind us”, “inherently similar”, and “reduce
confusion”. In *Intercultural Communication in the Global Workplace* (1995:35), Iris Varner describes the book’s goals: “This book offers an approach to unfamiliar cultures that makes understanding them easier and consequently makes business communication with them more effective”. Sameness, assimilation, diminishment of difference—these guidebooks utilize salience of difference as a means to an end, that being sameness. Thus, it was important to include these codes in the category to make sure these thematic patterns were acknowledged and in order to demonstrate how difference has been used as a conceptual tool to promote assimilation.

Culture as a Mechanism of the Economy encompasses a compilation of words and phrases related to culture as source and product of economic processes, particularly a source of economic growth, and a function of economic affluence. This category primary associates culture within a context of levels of power and social hierarchy. References to “developing” or “developed” nations, degrees of cultural “complexity” or “simplicity” situate culture within degrees of evolution.

Culture as an Institution is a similar notion, but it defines culture as being a part of a wider social structure; as an institution, it interacts with political and economic structures of society to encourage certain ways of living. The guidebooks discuss culture as encompassing “cognitive normative and regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behavior” (Gannon & Newman, 2002:17). It is a construct that affects every level of society, not limited to a certain sphere, but important in explaining mechanisms for social interaction in all spheres. This notion has its origins in sociology, where institutions form part of the analytical basis of social life.
Culture as Cognition includes words and phrases related to culture as a “mechanism of information processing” or as Hofstede (1980: 7) defines it, “software of the mind,” determined entirely by a set of cognitively programmed schemes designed to call upon elements of culture when the situation calls for it. These schemes are “hardwired” and completely controlled by the “normative systems” we choose to select as “tools” for interacting socially.

Culture as Difference is a compilation of codes relating to degrees of difference, and/or as noted earlier, as a mechanism by which to make sameness more salient, to magnify difference or to promote social assimilation. In this category, culture is described as “innate” (Marx, 2001:27), “learned” (Gannon & Newman 2002: 32), “inherent” or “observed” (Carte, 2008:49), words which are linked to difference as a product of cognition or as a behavior that can be taught. Please see Table 4.2.
### Table 4.2. Perceptions of Culture: Content-Oriented

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic Patterns</th>
<th>Codes Obtained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture as mechanism of the economy</td>
<td>Goal of natural economic growth, economic prosperity, predictive of national economic wealth, mechanism for economic growth to shared, financial action, effects on capital investment/technological innovation, Protestant Worth Ethic, entrepreneurial spirit, capital formation, technological progress, hierarchy in national state, vertical versus horizontal cultures, simple versus complex cultures, social class, upper class, west versus eastern culture, developed, developing , strong versus weak, good versus bad, levels, hierarchical cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture as institution</td>
<td>typically confounded with other attributes of a society such as various institutions, economic systems, or it remains entirely unspecified or implicit in the model, political/civil freedoms, influences political systems, culturally based—political freedom, industrial democracy, how culture influences peoples’ affairs, broader construct than culture, include culture and law, culture at industry or organizational level, broader construct than culture, cognitive and normative regulative structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture as cognition</td>
<td>Mechanisms of information processing, how employees interpret and evaluate situation and processes affect behavior, cognitive and cultural explanations, creatures of our own social creation, cognitively focus on others, individualist cognitions, several normative systems to choose from, cognitions are like tools, sample cognition depending on situation, software of the mind, knowledge to function effectively in social environment; hardwired; brain has own reality, sense of space/time, memory; Hall’s culture,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture as difference</td>
<td>good versus bad, levels, adaption, difference, conflict, similarities that bind us, contradictory norms found, some cultures have fewer rules/norms, homogenous, universal or particular treatment of people, inequality, people are different, innate, inherent, impacts perceived incentives of learning, hinder development of trust and increase costs, forms knowledge, unpredictable, confusing, inherently similar, weigh variables differently, idocentric, allocentric, comfort staying in one’s own culture, adjust to changes, inclusion, unfamiliar, understand them better, people from different cultures really are different, acceptance of diversity, uniformity is easier to deal with than diversity, value and leverage differences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A.2.b.Structure-Oriented

The codes sorted into this substantive/analytical category address the mechanisms by which the guidebook data is structured. I was looking particularly at the organization of the textual material and how the structure of the texts and the corresponding subject matter address conceptions of culture. I formulated four thematic patterns presented systematically one after another, demonstrating a formula by which culture is presented: Symptoms of Culture, Diagnoses of Culture, Syndromes of culture, and Treatments of Culture. The structural patterns mirror a standard public health medical diagnostic approach (Laing, 1971: 14). In this model, symptoms are observed (shock, frustration and anxiety relating to foreign encounters), diagnosis is made (acknowledgement and development of culture as source of symptoms), classifications of these diagnoses are created within more coherent categorizations (syndromes of culture), concluding with potential treatments associated with successfully minimizing or eliminating culture within international interactions (Laing, 1971:14).

As with the material on Content-orientation (Table 3.2), this list does not provide a comprehensive list of all the codes compiled for each diagnostic phase. Rather, it presents an illustrative set of the codes I have derived from the guidebooks. The guidebooks demonstrated a remarkably systematic methodology Symptoms of culture refer to negative feelings, perceptions, business interactions that have been encountered as a result of culture. The “frustration” and “confusion” of dealing with a “slippery” and therefore, unstable conception such as culture, provokes feelings of “shock” and “discomfort” with unfamiliar territories. These negative emotional reactions to culture are described as “symptoms”, in that they are approached as physical manifestations of a condition which can be diagnosed based on these familiar negative characteristics.
Diagnoses of culture represent the phase in which culture is identified as the source of these symptomatic characteristics, and to which a more explicit explanation of its characteristics is given. While seven of the guidebooks give explicit definitions of culture, the other three identify its characteristics implicitly. For example, in Simintiras (2003:24), culture is not explicitly defined but characterized indirectly as a determinant of “economic differences, taste differences and strategies for action”. Syndromes of culture, as the clinical pathways diagnostic model would suggest, can be identified as a condition, classifying some of the understandings of cultural difference within succinct groups. Finally, treatment of culture, found at the end of the structural pattern of textual material, offers guided solutions to “solve” or “reduce” problems of culture, increase “inclusion” and make culture less “unfamiliar”. Please see Table 4.3.
Table 4.3 Structure-Oriented Codes of transnational business guidebooks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic Patterns</th>
<th>Codes Obtained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Symptoms of Culture</td>
<td>Conflicting, frustrating, unfamiliar, all over the world nations are trying to come to terms with the growing diversity of their populations, can’t grasp culture, slippery and soft, hinder development of trust and increase cost of communication, inhibit efficacy and limits informal mechanisms of knowledge, decrease utility of alliances by restricting actual learning, culture shock, unpredictability, best dealt with, serious difficulties in negotiation, easily run into misunderstandings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnoses of Culture</td>
<td>collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>externally exposed condition leads to meaning making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>economic differences, taste differences, strategies for action, looking at culture as a tool kit, segmented to function within a social structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>culture--people who speak particular language, dialect, during a specific historic period, in a definable geographic region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>functions to improve the adaption of members of culture to a particular ecology, includes knowledge that people need to have in order to function effectively in their social environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>culture is treated as one of the many exogenous factors that influence management processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syndrome of Culture</td>
<td>complex set of variables involving a group's beliefs and ways of living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment of Culture</td>
<td>high-context vs. low-context, individualist vs. collectivist cultures, long vs short term orientation, informal vs. formal cultures, rigid time vs. fluid time (polychronic vs. monochronic) cultures, emotionally expressive vs. emotionally reserved cultures, vertical vs horizontal cultures, high uncertainty avoidance vs. low uncertainty avoidance cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This book offers an approach to unfamiliar cultures that makes understanding them easier, you need to know what to expect, culturemes, method of adaptation--cultural dimensions are used as a guidebook to navigate the uncertain pathways of transnational interaction which makes it easier to decipher/determine standardized/normative ways of perceiving culture, Hamburger University, intercultural training, contextualizing business operations to make it more comprehensive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B. Concept of Culture in Anthropological Theory

Based on materials gleaned from transcribed data from eight recorded interviews conducted with practicing anthropologists at the University of Florida, I developed two content categories used to describe the relationships articulated by interviewees between anthropology and culture: Anthropology: Ambassador of Culture and Culture as Social knowledge.

B.1. Anthropology: Ambassador of Culture

This category relates to the role of anthropology in shaping conceptions of culture from the perspective of the anthropologist. This content category is divided into two smaller sub-groups: Keyholder to Cultural Knowledge and Cultural Advocate.

Anthropology as Keyholder to Cultural Knowledge is primarily associated with the self-identified authority of anthropology in conceiving of culture in and outside the discipline. Issues related to methodological and theoretical differences related to culture, particularly in reference to “time-depth” focus of anthropology, and its emphasis on locality distinguish it from sociological and psychological inquiry.

Anthropology as Cultural Advocate further delineates difference in methodology between anthropology and the other social sciences in its efforts at “holism”, its “big picture” focus and its rebuke of other “simplistic assumptions regarding behavior”. Despite this overall promotion of anthropological authority over the concept, the data demonstrated a negative association with the critique-focused anthropological analysis, as a cause for the discipline’s lack of application. Please see Table 4.4.
### Table 4.4. Content Categories in Anthropological Theory: Role of Anthropology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic Patterns</th>
<th>Codes Obtained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keyholder to Cultural Knowledge</td>
<td>Method and lens through which we see data, irresponsible to remain just academic, dealing with “real” problems, they understood it to be a limitation whereas I understood it to be the rationale, unique contribution to culture concept, anthropology links larger and smaller structures, methodological difference, anthropology as marginal, infer only by watching people, be relevant, culture outside anthropology is a closed system-more metaphorical, time-depth, intolerant perspectives, force us out of distant position, influences what happens on ground, blurring lines, understand where differences are coming from and how to deal with them, advise companies so that these industries can be more effective, max use of labor supplies, lack legitimacy, ethnography in modified form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Advocate</td>
<td>People have simplistic assumptions about behavior, holistic, big picture, cultural knowledge, impact on people, we have the tools, lenses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Content categories regarding anthropological conceptions of anthropology’s relationship to culture, constructed from Audio Transcription Data.
B.2. Culture as Social Knowledge

The audio transcription data produced a set of two thematic patterns composed of a number of codes related to culture as social knowledge: mechanisms for group interaction and meaning making: *Mechanism for Group Interaction* and *Meaning Making*.

B.2.a. Mechanism for Group Interaction

The data suggests an emphasis on “group” functioning, on the relevance of context or “environment in which that knowledge is being transferred, and the importance of culture as a “shared” mechanism of understanding our social world.

B.2.b. Meaning Making

The second categorization of Culture as Social Knowledge was the idea that culture is conceived of through a series of meaning making operations; culture is a set of “abstractions”, a “set of categories”, that are internalized and “not questioned”. This idea is akin to that produced within international business. Please see Table 4.5.
Table 4.5. Content Categories regarding anthropological conceptions of culture constructed from Audio Transcription Data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic Patterns</th>
<th>Codes Obtained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mechanism for Group Interaction</td>
<td>Culture is equated to the social group, human in context of other people, environments, situations, shared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning Making</td>
<td>Abstractions, set of categories, integrated, adaptive, learned, big C &amp; little c, internalized, not questioned, ideals, rule-governed, context</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to examine the manner in which transnational business conceives of culture, and how these conceptions relate to those in anthropology. Content analysis of transnational business guidebooks and corporate policy handbooks resulted in two datasets called: Cultural Syndromes, and Perceptions of Culture. Content analysis of audio transcription data also resulted in two datasets: Anthropology-Ambassador of Culture, and Culture as Social Knowledge. I chose to present the data within these two datasets because I wanted to clearly delineate between the two kinds of analysis. The goal of this study is to see how these two categories of actors relate, and therefore categorizing them in different datasets clearly demarcates them from one another and allows for more effective comparative analysis.

A. PSYCHOLOGICAL BASIS FOR CULTURAL MODELING

A.1 Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions

The concept of syndromes of culture is derived from the work of two psychologists, Harry Triandis and Geert Hofstede, who are said to have shaped the critical analysis of culture within international business theory (cite works that support this). Hofstede’s *Culture’s Consequences: International Differences in Work Related Values* (1980) formed the early foundations of “cultural classifications” within the field. His emphasis is on national culture as the primary unit of cultural analysis, which is by the far the most influential element of his contribution to international business research.

The Hofstede dimensions of national cultures are rooted in the idea of “unconscious” values. This model posits that because values are acquired in childhood, national cultures are remarkably stable over time; changes in national values are a matter of generations. What we see changing around us, in response to changing circumstances are practices: symbols, heroes and rituals,
leaving the underlying values untouched. This is why differences between countries often have such a remarkable historical continuity (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2009)

Over the course of four years (1979-1983), Hofstede performed comparative studies on a total of fifty-three countries worldwide (Hofstede and Bond, 1984:418). Hofstede conducted a factor analysis treatment of the measures he collected for all the country averages, producing four dimensions of culture by which he articulated that all countries could be compared. Factor analysis, as opposed to the content analysis conducted in this study, involves a statistical method used to determine levels of variability in units of analysis. Thus, the scores compiled by Hofstede for each country he studied were filtered into a statistical model that recognized trends in the data. By contrast, content analysis is more qualitative, relying more on the human element to recognize trends found in the data. Even with the use of statistical models, content analysis focuses much more on the qualitative side of data contextualization and meaning beyond data collection while factor analysis quantifies the initial observation so that it may be easier to quantify. This makes factor analysis more liable to miss implicit, contextualized trends in the data that it may assume to find few trends in the data.

This systematic methodology is perhaps useful in accounting for a large amount of data, but it loses much of its symbolic complexity as a result. Nevertheless, through this factor analysis, Hofstede determined four ‘dimensions’ by which people group themselves based on their distinctive value systems.

“[These dimensions] dealt with four anthropological problem areas that different national societies handle differently: ways of coping with inequality, ways of coping with uncertainty, the relationship of the individual with her or his primary group, and the emotional implications of having been born as a girl or as a boy. These became the Hofstede dimensions of national culture: Power Distance,
First and foremost, it is important to note the role taken by anthropology in Hofstede’s analysis. His analytical categories are anthropological, but his own psychologically-based analysis is more finite, categorical, and easier to distinguish. Hofstede manipulates these finite cultural dimensions as quantifiable categories upon which to rank countries, thus making the data appear more definitive and fixed. It is unsurprising that with such value placed upon quantifiable data, anthropology would be relegated to a merely descriptive position, assuming no relevance in actual analysis. This simultaneous presence and absence of anthropology in the construction of culture is indicative of anthropology’s tenuous role in shaping conceptions of culture within international business. This point will be elaborated through the course of this discussion.

Hofstede’s latter two dimensions of national culture, namely “individualism versus collectivism” and “masculinity versus femininity,” serve as foundations for syndromes of culture (Hofstede, 1980: 14). These dimensions inspired psychologist, Harry Triandis, to expand upon the analytical notion of culture as a set of binaries, differentiating groups of people at a national level. “The first step toward the development of dimensions of cultural variations is the identification of cultural syndromes” (Triandis, 1996: 411). Triandis identifies culture as consisting of shared elements “that provide the standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, communicating, and acting among those who share a language, a historic period, and a geographic location” (Triandis, 1996: 411). He identifies culture as geographically bounded and maintains that by studying cultural difference, we can determine the degrees to which cultural regions or nations are similar. Triandis situates culture within a psychologically-based model, in which culture is conceptualized as an autonomous, uniform force acting upon individuals who encompass a national group. Anthropological theory, as conceived by cultural idealists, namely
Ruth Benedict, emphasizes that culture is not an autonomous, uniform force externally acting upon individuals within a group, and that “differences in values and attitudes are expected to occur within and between sectors of the same society, but underlying, generally shared understandings are also thought to typify the society at large” (Silverman, 1981:152). This favors a more conceptually complex and flexible understanding of culture, which in context of transnational business, would be problematic for producing concrete generalizations about national culture. This forms the psychologically-based foundation forms the basis of theoretical basis of cultural syndromes.

A.2 TRIANDIS and CULTURAL SYNDROMES

Triandis’s work with cultural syndromes is a refinement of Hofstede’s earlier articulations on cultural dimensions. Triandis defines a cultural syndrome as “a pattern of shared attitudes, beliefs, categorizations, self-definitions, norms, role definitions, and values that is organized around a theme that can be identified among those who speak a particular language, during a specific historic period, and in a definable geographic region” (Triandis, 1996:407). As a leading scholar in psychology, Triandis attempts to promote a basis for universal psychological theory, merging what he refers to as “contemporary” and “indigenous” traditions. These categorizations differentiate what he refers to as “contemporary” or “western” psychology, as originating from Western populations (“…Europe, North America, and Australia”) and “indigenous” or “non-western” as originating from anywhere else. (Triandis,1996: 407). In approaching psychological theory as a set of two opposing oppositions, Triandis is creating opposition and basing analysis on categories of difference. His efforts to converge these binaries, suggest an attempt to diminish this opposition or difference in order to create a systematic framework in which to judge cultures. In his influential article, “The Psychological Measurement
of Cultural Syndromes” (1996), he outlines his objectives for integrating the use of cultural syndromes within the discipline of psychology:

To bridge the gap between contemporary psychology and many of the indigenous psychologies, we need constructs that will indicate how a phenomenon found in contemporary psychology is modified in indigenous psychologies. This article proposes that cultural syndromes are such constructs. Cultural syndromes are conceived as dimensions of cultural variation that can be used as parameters of psychological theories. That is, if a population is high on a given dimension of cultural variation, the theory will take one form; if the population is low on that dimension, the theory might take a somewhat different form. In that way, the current psychological theories will become special cases of the universal theories. (Triandis, 1996: 408).

Triandis’ objective is to use cultural syndromes as a mechanism for converging western and non-western conceptions of culture for the purpose of creating a systematic, uniform framework from which all cultures can be guided to understand the self in reference to the group. Endowing culture with the meaning attributed to it by psychology, and universalizing this particular notion of culture appears to be a primary objective for Hofstede and Triandis, and by extension, the textual materials of this study heavily employing these scholars’ theories.

Triandis, for example, identifies a short selection of cultural syndromes: tightness, cultural complexity, active-passive, honor, collectivism, individualism, vertical and horizontal relationships. Collectivism, for example, is identified as follows:

“In some cultures the self is defined as an aspect of a collective (e.g., family or tribe); personal goals are subordinated to the goals of this collective; norms, duties, and obligations regulate most social behavior; taking into account the needs of others in the regulation of social behavior is widely practiced. Traditional cultures and many of the cultures of Asia and Africa include many collectivist elements” (Triandis, 1996:408).

That is, systematic measuring of these conditions at a national level, according to Triandis, can be executed through a series of experiments at an individual level. Following this theory that
national culture is innately employed at an individual level, Trafimow and colleagues (1991) subsequently conducted an experiment assessing levels of collectivism versus individualism in participants.

“The collectivist condition used the instruction ‘think of what you have in common with your family and friends.’ The individualist condition used the instruction ’think of what makes you different from your family and friends.’ These instructions resulted in statistically different social content of the self in the expected direction. Furthermore, the social content of the sentence completions of introductory psychology students with Chinese names was significantly higher than the social content of the students with European names”. Triandis et al. (1991: 651)

The conclusions presented by Trafimow et al. (1991) are problematic. First of all, the study surveyed psychology students from a continental region of Europe and compared it to a country only based on their names; there was no indication whether these students even identified themselves as Chinese or European. Their status as psychology students could have biased their answers; and the use of two leading questions as their sole source of methodological inquiry suggests that their answers would be limited at best. Furthermore, indications of “social content” are very subjective, especially if measured by self-professed “western” psychologists studying supposedly products of “indigenous” culture. The purpose of presenting and critiquing this study is to demonstrate the severe lack of solid methodological inquiry on culture; the studies of both Hofstede and Triandis are narrowly conceived but their conclusions are widely promoted and form the theoretical foundations for all the textual materials of this study.

A.3 THE THEORETICAL INFLUENCE OF HOFSTEDE & TRIANDIS

While explicit references to the term ‘cultural syndromes’ was only found in two of the ten guidebooks (Gesteland, 2002; Gannon and Newman, 2002), all of the guidebooks discussed at least one of Triandis’s list of cultural syndromes, as a major part of their conceptual toolkit for
approaching culture. Gesteland’s *Intercultural Business Behavior* (2002) observes four “patterns of cross-cultural behavior,” clearly derived from Triandis’ constructions, including deal-focused versus relationship-focused, informal versus formal cultures, rigid-time versus fluid time cultures, and emotionally expressive versus emotionally reserved cultures. In doing so, Gesteland “aims to reduce confusion and introduce some predictability by classifying international business customs and practices into logical patterns” (2002: 9). Gesteland is following Triandis’ theoretical approach in that, by approaching culture through a series of recognizable, predictable sets of dichotomous relationships, difference can be operationalized to determine degrees of sameness.

In *Cultural Context in Business Communication* (Niemeier, 1998), high-context versus low-context cultures are compared, in which “meaning is seen as comprising both context—i.e., stored or shared information—and transmitted or explicit information. The more shared context there is, the less information must be transmitted, and the less shared context there is, the more information must be transmitted” (1998: 33). Varner and Beamer (1995) also allude to this notion of high-context versus low-context cultures, identifying “German Swiss as a very low-context culture, in which messages are spelled out fully, clearly, and precisely. He identified Japan as a high-context culture, where messages are multilevel and implicit” (1995: 18). He puts the United States on the “low-context side of the middle” (1995:18). Once again, degrees of difference are being used to determine gradations of sameness.

Cultural syndromes and the application of related concepts to the analysis of cultural difference clearly draw from the theoretical foundations of Hofstede, Triandis, and their followers. Each of the innovations articulated by Hofstede and Triandis, such as emphasis on high versus low context cultures, is mirrored by the frequency of occurrence of these same ideas
observed in the materials of my datasets. The subsequent use and elaboration of cultural syndromes are all associated with scholars who have followed in their footsteps by utilizing the same conceptual framework. This indicates that scholars of international business have embraced this psychology-based theoretical conception of cultural analysis. It also suggests that these scholars have accepted the idea of cultural syndromes as relating to behavioral and value-driven patterns of national culture, and that these can be directly reflected in transnational corporate interactions. “In countries whose languages derive from old German—including German, Dutch, and English—negotiation styles tend to be linear and direct” (Niemeier, 2002:37). First and foremost, the quote illuminates the relationship of culture to language. In this case, language is understood as functioning interchangeably with culture, as a mechanism for identifying differences between people and situating them geographically. While the above example demonstrates an instance when a binary, dichotomous relationship was not employed, there is an implication of difference, suggesting that other countries without this idiomatic quality are not as direct or linear in their negotiation style.

“Low context cultures tend to value goals and procedures and short-term, purposive behavior; high-context cultures tend to value long-term relationships. Low-context cultures also tend to be individualist, while high-context ones tend to be more collectivist” (Niemeier, 1998:34). In this way, many of the authors combined a variety of syndromes to characterize cultural difference across nations, following the methodological and theoretical tools of Hofstede and Triandis combined.

B. PERCEPTIONS OF CULTURE

The results demonstrate that international business textual material (guidebooks and policy manuals) approach culture through both content-oriented and structure-oriented means. I
developed these orientations by employing content analysis to systematically examine the data for thematic patterns, narrowing down these patterns and providing labels for each group of data adduced. Perceptions of culture are established through content by means of four categories: Culture as Mechanism of the Economy, Culture as an Institution, Culture as Cognition and Culture as Difference.

These categories address the means by which these textual materials address culture, both directly and indirectly. I developed the idea of Culture as a Mechanism of the Economy when I noticed patterns in the data relating to economic growth, economic class, wealth and the commodification of culture. Culture as an Institution was developed in conjunction with the former category, when I observed patterns relating to the institutionalization of culture, and its relationship to other elements of social institutions such as politics, economics and civil society. Culture as Cognition was developed out of an observance of all the direct and indirect characterizations used to define culture, in which the purely cerebral connotations of culture were employed to approach the concept. I developed the idea of Culture as Difference from the consistent use of culture as an unconscious mechanism for differentiating between nations; it was inherently understood as a way of making difference more salient.

These categorizations represent the ways in which the guidebooks and corporate policy manuals refer directly to culture in the textual materials, or how words and phrases were used to implicitly or explicitly presented to denote certain meaning related to the concept.

Perceptions of culture are also present systematically in the structure and organization of the guidebook contents, and I discerned four elements of this organization which I call: Symptoms of Culture, Diagnoses of Culture, Syndromes of Culture, and Treatments of culture. Structure-
oriented conceptions of culture were conceived and developed through an examination of how the guidebooks are organized in discussions on culture. I noticed the systematic manner by which culture was approached within these textual materials, as if it were a disease or condition, and the only way to get a cure was to understand their symptoms, recognize the source of those symptoms, narrow the conditions determined by the source of diagnosis, and finally determine a treatment for reducing its effects. I situated these stages as analogous to a medical diagnostic model, loosely based on noted psychiatrist Robert Laing’s conception of medical diagnosis, conceived of several phases of which I narrowed down to four: symptoms, diagnoses, syndromes and treatment (Laing, 1971:13). “The medical model is an approach to pathology that aims to find medical treatments for diagnosed symptoms and syndromes and treats the human body as a very complex mechanism” (Laing, 1971:18).

B.1 Content-Oriented

My analysis of the use of culture in my textual sources is approached through four distinctive but related thematic patterns.

B.1.a. Culture as a mechanism of the economy

Culture as a mechanism of the economy conceives of culture as associated with economic processes, as a product of economic wealth and a source of economic growth. The data suggests that culture and economic growth are often correlated in a cause-and-effect scheme, in which embracing culture can lead to economic prosperity in transnational business interactions. For example, in General Motors’ *Diversity Scheme*, they state that “cultural competence is essential for global growth” (General Motors, 2009). Thus, a certain amount of economic value is attached to the idea of cultural knowledge. Gaining access to cultural knowledge, according to these sources, is highly beneficial to the overall potential for economic growth. In Nike’s *People and
Code of Conduct Report, the use of culture is demonstrated as a key to maintaining economic superiority: “Diversity grows our competitive advantage”. This idea advances the position of culture as a valuable commodity, capable of controlling the economic power of a transnational corporation. As denoted by the Nike example, economic superiority and economic power go hand-in-hand, which is demonstrated frequently in the data.

Culture is often situated in a hierarchical context of levels of power, growth and prosperity. While culture may not be explicitly advanced as a key variable in economic processes, these examples demonstrate the strong, pointed, implicit promotion of culture as a mechanism of economic growth. Within the transnational business guidebooks, words and phrases such as “simple cultures and complex cultures” (Simitras, 2003:16), “social class” (Neimeier, 2002: 37), “technological progress” (Gannon & Newman, 2002:24), and “upper class” (Neimeier, 2002: 37), denote the idea of an evolutionary cultural scheme determined by the ability to attain economic wealth.

Many of the cultural syndromes observed in the guidebooks, especially those denoting difference between Western (i.e. European, American, Australian) and non-Western cultures, focused on issues of social and economic hierarchy, developing versus developed nations and their cultural traits. “The cultural syndromes are ’measurements’ for discerning positions within a cultural and economic hierarchy” (Earley and Gibson, 2002:46). This explicitly hierarchical cultural scheme loosely resembles the conception of culture promoted by 19th century evolutionism; namely, Lewis Henry Morgan’s formulation of cultural evolution according to the basis of subsistence or technoeconomics, and Edward Tylor’s hierarchy of civilization, placing the most culturally evolved (Europeans) at the top (Stocking, 1966: 22). This idea would be heavily critiqued by Sewell (1999: 28) who noted:
Culture has a semiotic structuring principle that is different from political, economic, and geographical structuring principles that are uniform in practice—even if action were almost entirely determined by overwhelming disparities in economic resources, those disparities would still have to be rendered meaningful in action according to a semiotic logic” (Sewell, 1999: 28).

B.1.b. Culture as Institution

Linked to the idea of culture as mechanism of the economy and its relationship with power, control and status, is the notion of Culture as an Institution. The term ‘institution’, associated primarily with sociology, is defined by Patricia Martin as:

A complex phenomenon with multiple facets: 'a cluster of social usages, possessing some 'prevalence and permanence,' 'embedded in the habits of a group of people or the customs of a people' and accompanied by formal and informal 'sanctions' that 'function' to 'fix the confines of and impose form upon the activities of human beings.” and often associated with “controlling, obligating or inhibiting (2004: 1251).

‘Institution’, much like culture, is conceptualized in a number of distinctive ways, and assumes a variety of characteristics that make for often muddled uses of the term. While psychology conceives of culture as a product of individual interactions with the environment, sociology conceives of culture as source and product of human society. This conception is borne out of what Sewell (1999: 38) notes as the “causal efficacy” of sociological theory, in which culture can be situated and compared to any and all standard sociological variables sociology has constructed culture as a set of variables, “whose influence on behavior can be rigorously compared to that of such standard sociological variables as class, ethnicity, gender, level of education, economic interest, and the like” (Sewell, 1999: 38).

Culture, according to Gesteland (2002: 12), is “typically confounded with other attributes of society such as various institutions, economic systems, or it remains entirely unspecified or implicit in the model” (2002:19). In relating culture to ‘institution’, the textual materials are
confirming a sense of parallel terminological ambiguity found in the examination of both concepts. Professor Avner Greif of Stanford University discusses the relevance of institutions:

Studying institutions sheds light on why some countries are rich and others poor, why some enjoy a welfare-enhancing political order and others do not. Socially beneficial institutions promote welfare-enhancing cooperation and action. They provide the foundations of markets by efficiently assigning, protecting, and altering property rights; securing contracts; and motivating specialization and exchange (Greif, 2006:2).

Greif’s discussion on institutions highlights the idea of culture as a foundational element, once again driving the forces of economic wealth, and establishing the means by which other institutions can function. This sociologically-based understanding of the concept situates culture. The textual material conceives of culture as existing within encompassing “cognitive, normative and regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behavior” (Gannon and Newman, 2002: 21). This idea is further evidenced by Simitras (2003, 3), with her emphasis on how “culture influences peoples’ affairs.” Both culture as a mechanism of the economy and culture as an institution are linked in this idea of culture as source and product of scaled social structures; responsible for the creation and transference of everything social. This conception is borne out of what Sewell (1999: 38) noted as the “causal efficacy” of sociological theory, in which culture can be situated and compared to any and all standard sociological variables.

B.1.c. Culture as cognition.

Similar to sociology’s contribution to perceptions of culture within these texts, psychological tools of analysis assume a sizable influence over the explicit conceptual understandings of the concept. This is particularly evident within the third category, Culture as Cognition. Culture is conceived of according to psychologist Hofstede’s (1980) “software of the mind” in several of
the guidebooks, particularly in Mitchell (2009: 9) and Carte (2008: 12). Gesteland (2002: iv) refers to culture as a “mechanism of information processing”, and Edward T. Hall, another noted psychologist, is referenced heavily in Niemeier (1998: 26). These references are associated with the notion of culture as a set of “normative systems” (Varner & Beamer, 1995:5), from which our brains are automated to retrieve appropriate social behavior on a situational basis. To further this point, Simitras (2003, 28), to describe the process of information retrieval, noted that “cognitions are like tools.”

Anthropologist Ann Swindler’s “toolkit” encompasses the idea that culture is composed of “strategies of action,” “with segmented amounts of knowledge used at any given time to function within a social structure” (Sewell, 1999: 37). Culture is then understood to be a mechanism by which retrieval of information for the purpose of social interaction is systematic and easy to identify. Culture is the toolbox from which “knowledge [is taken] to function effectively in a social environment” (Varner and Beamer, 1995: 8). This is a particularly convenient method of conceiving of culture within international business, in that it limits the ambiguities associated with the term (even if those ambiguities are enhanced within more implicit conceptions of the term).

In relating culture to processes of the mind, and not factoring in the role of the group, culture is also assumed to rely upon individual promotion and creation of cultural knowledge. Malinowski’s pure functionalism mirrors this emphasis on the individual’s relationship to the environment, particularly its biological need for assuming and transferring culture (Langness, 1979: 47). To conceive of culture as an individual process is problematic in conceptions of transnational business because these conceptions form the basis for its analytical focus not on the individual but on the group, or rather, on the nation, as noted previously.
Hofstede’s experiments (1979-1984) related to cultural dimensions were cited within Neimeier (1998) and Gesteland (2002) as evidence upon which they relied to guide their analysis. These experiments are based on limited, closed questioning of a select group of participants from various countries. From the answers informants provided, Hofstede and his collaborators ranked nations according to the degree to which they exhibited specific cultural dimensions. By conceptualizing culture at an individual level but attributing these understandings to the group (i.e. state) level, these textual materials confound their levels of analysis and make assumptions about the standardization of mental processes in order to create culture. As observed by Weisinger and Salipante, these broadly understood notions of national culture ignore “other important factors affecting behavior and effectiveness” (2001: 212). This problematic notion is borne out further in the final content-oriented categorization of Culture as Difference.

B.1.d. Culture as Difference
This notion addresses culture as a mechanism for producing distinctions between groups at a national level. This relates to the idea of culture as cognition in that the standardized mental processes of one group producing culture will be different from another, creating clearly defined delineations between groups. This difference produces reactions of cognitive dissonance (frustration, confusion), which my textual materials present as normative reactions to cognitive systems that are not our own. This denotes a sense of “innate” and “inherent” cultural understanding, something that is not acknowledged or recognized by the out-group but that functions within each person and cannot be changed. As noted by Gesteland, “we are creatures of our own social creation” who find “comfort staying in [our] own culture” (2002:34). This implies that culture is a function of individual efforts projected onto a larger but limited social
environment. This conception of culture functions very narrowly as a causal link between the importance of individual projections on a group, but fails to account for the effects of group projections on the individual.

Culture as difference is a particularly interesting conceptual tool utilized by these texts because it produces a number of derivative functions beyond simply differentiation. One of the more important implicit uses of culture as difference is as a mechanism by which to make its opposite, sameness, more salient. Difference is said to “hinder development of trust and increase costs” (Neimeier, 1998: 27). The objective put forth by these textual materials is to “reduce conflict”, to “adjust to changes”, to “adapt”, to discover “the similarities that bind us”. All these mechanisms are used to reduce difference, to diminish the effects of culture in order to promote sameness. Culture as a negative function of difference is therefore implied in this understanding, contributing to an overall negative conception of culture.

In another derivative function of differentiation, beyond simply acknowledging and diminishing difference is the notion of magnifying difference. Dow Chemical Company emphasized the need to “value and leverage differences” (2010: 13), the only company to suggest creating success through the magnification of difference. The other companies focused on acknowledgement or diminishment of culture or difference for the purposes of prosperity. This idea is of course contrary to what is noted within the guidebooks, particularly in reference to the power of understanding culture for the purpose of economic growth.

While most companies acknowledge the importance of making diversity a business consideration, diversity is often not a top business priority. Other business initiatives that present more compelling, factual evidence of payback on investment win out over diversity initiatives, which seem to offer less predictable and tangible benefits (Robinson and Dechant, 1993: 22).
There are two important things to note in this quote. First, note the lukewarm reception of diversity as an important contributing factor to corporate success. While things have certainly changed since the time of this publication, this relative lack of concern is paralleled in the corporate policy textual materials. By contrast, the guidebook data attaches a sizable amount of economic value to culture as a contributing element of corporate growth. Another note is the use of diversity as an indicator of culture. Culture is often referred to interchangeably with “diversity” in the data, a divergent understanding of difference, but nevertheless an important one. According to Robinson and Dechant, “companies competing in today’s fast-paced global market tend to favor the broadest definitions of diversity-ones that encompass differences in gender, racioethnicity, age, physical abilities, qualities, and sexual orientation, as well as differences in attitudes, perspectives and background” (1993: 22). By using the term diversity, these texts tend to focus on sociological variables associated with difference (gender, racioethnicity, age, physical abilities, qualities, and sexual orientation), and relegate more anthropological notions of difference (attitudes, perspectives and background) to a secondary position. Diversity denotes a sense of culture within corporations and not an acknowledgement of culture within transnational business interactions, and thus, it appears as if notions of culture overseas are not acknowledged directly within these corporate policy manuals. Additionally, as noted by Robinson and Dechant, “the broadest notions of diversity” suggest once again, a reliance on vague, ambiguous and all-encompassing notions of culture (1993:24).

McDonalds, Hewett Packard, General Motors and Accenture all use the phrase “culture of inclusion”, not to make difference more salient, but to make social assimilation more effective. This is particularly important because it goes beyond the idea of making difference less prominent, and actively promoting the notion of cultural integration of sameness. It suggests that
culture can be “learned” in the same manner that it can be diminished. This is in contrast to some of the guidebooks stating the “innate” or “inherent” nature of cultural difference, as noted previously. Similarly, For example, McDonalds opened Hamburger University in 1961 as a training facility for its management stationed all around the world:

Since its inception, training at Hamburger University has emphasized consistent restaurant operations procedures, service, quality and cleanliness. It has become the company’s global center of excellence for McDonald’s operations training and leadership development. (McDonalds Inc, 2009)

This training facility is essentially a mechanism by which McDonalds can indoctrinate employees into the McDonalds model of business behavior. While this has less to do with transnational corporate interactions, it has much to do with conceptions of culture at the corporate level. This focus on social assimilation furthers the negative conceptions of culture as obstacles to corporate success, and an overall objective for diminishing cultural differences, and integrating sameness for the purpose of prosperity. Once again this conception diverges from those promoted by the guidebooks, which acknowledges difference as inherent and adaption as imperative for economic success.

B.2 Structure-Oriented Perceptions of Culture

In analyzing presence of culture in the structure and organization of the textual materials I have examined for this project, I developed four distinctive stages of organization, following the tenets of a medical diagnosis: Symptoms of culture, Diagnoses of culture, Syndromes of culture, and Treatments of culture. By situating the textual material within a standard public health diagnostic model, a product of medical and scientific methodology, the purpose was to demonstrate once again, the standardized, systematic mechanisms by which the international business guidebooks conceive of and deploy notions of and meanings attributed to culture.
B.2.a. Symptoms of culture

Symptoms of Culture refers to a systematic mechanism by which culture is introduced within the textual materials as a source of negative physical and emotional stimuli for administrates personnel visiting nations with “unfamiliar cultures”. These personnel must grapple with the “slippery and soft”, “frustrating” and “unpredictable” forces of culture that produce feelings of discomfort. This idea was referenced most frequently as “culture shock”, which, terminologically speaking, denotes a sense of physical or emotional distress and alarm. These physical and emotional reactions are presented first within the organizing framework of the guidebooks. As a “symptom” of culture, culture shock is the most salient and recognizable result of coming in contact with difference. Thus, it is the most familiar to the readership that will be using these guidebooks as aids in their own business interactions. As expressed previously, culture is generally introduced as an obstacle to successful transnational interactions, “inhibiting the efficacy and limiting informal mechanisms of knowledge” (Mitchell, 2009: 41).

This lack of access to cultural knowledge appears to be a reoccurring theme within the data and presents the notion of the differential access to cultural content of insider versus outsider knowledge. The textual materials present the business actor as either occupying the position of the insider or that of the outsider (similar to anthropological conceptions of emic versus etic); those actors occupying the position of insider have access to cultural knowledge not available to the outsider. Because these guidebooks are approached primarily from the outsider’s perspective, namely the western (European, American, Australian) perspective, symptoms of culture demonstrate this lack of access to valuable cultural knowledge needed for successful transnational corporate interactions. While culture is understood as an important element of negotiation, the inability to “grasp culture” forms the basis of this symptomatic reaction. As a
result, culture is immediately labeled as the source or culprit for these negative reactions, the identification and examination of which I refer to as diagnoses of culture.

B.2.b. Diagnoses of culture

Diagnoses of Culture appropriates the symptomatic reactions of the outsider and joins these with a recognizable identification. The reader is presented first with a familiar sign of conflict (symptom), it is then followed up with an identification of its causal partner in culture (diagnosis). Culture is typically represented in the form of a definition (e.g. ‘complex set of variables involving a group’s beliefs and ways of living’) or implicitly referenced through its relationships to other variables (e.g. in relation to ‘economic differences, taste differences, strategies of action’). This identification is crucial because it situates the aspect of culture the author intends on illuminating for the purpose of their guidebook. Varner & Beamer (1995: 42) describes the typical role of culture in business proceedings: “one of the many exogenous factors that influence management processes”. This sets up an argument in favor of expanding the role of culture within management processes. In terms of my medical diagnosis analogy, this promotes a specification of the diagnosis: narrow conditions relating to the overall diagnosis. I refer to this as syndromes of culture, which also needs to be understood as code group alongside Perceptions of Culture (see above).

B.2.c. Syndromes of culture

The content-oriented syndromes of culture is not in question here; what is important is the placement of this code group within the framework of organization adopted by the textual materials. By further categorizing culture into these syndromes, the structure of the text is systematically developed; the readership is provided a number of categorizations of culture that they can educate themselves about and prepare for, in case they are confronted with them.
“These cultural dimensions are used as a guidebook to navigate the uncertain pathways of transnational interaction which makes it easier to decipher and determine standardized and normative ways of perceiving culture” (Gesteland, 2002: 31).

B.2.d Treatment of culture
This preparation, which I refer to as Treatment of Culture, is the final stage within the organizing framework. These treatments offer solutions to reduce conflict related to culture. Generally these solutions are introduced up front as mechanisms by which the reader can “know what to expect” (Marx, 2001: 16) when confronted with cultural difference, and proceeds to offer an “approach to unfamiliar cultures that makes understanding them easier” (Neimeier, 1998: 41). These solutions as characterized as “lists of do’s and don’ts” or are summations of the general differences in culture as addressed by the textual materials.

C. CULTURE AS SOCIAL KNOWLEDGE
The data suggests that practitioners of both applied and non-applied anthropology agree upon the role of anthropology as a discipline dedicated to group interaction. The data references culture as “equated to the social group” and also emphasizes context, in order to determine social knowledge. Several practitioners mentioned the importance of obtaining information about “people on the ground”, as well as group dynamics, in order to understand how they think. “Understanding what’s going on at a local level rather than global or transnational level, how do things on a transnational scale are affecting things locally…” This emphasis on locality of study is contrary to that understood within sociology and psychology and is therefore an essential component separating the methodological differences of the disciplines in shaping culture.

The data is heavily focused on culture as a meaning making apparatus although conceptions were not entirely clear and therefore difficult to pinpoint. Many of the practitioners hesitated, or stuck
to very limited definitions of culture, limiting these conceptions to a few words or meandering about long answers that gave on concrete, concise representation of the concept. Examining this manner of delivery is particularly valuable for observing how the data reflected these practitioners’ conceptions. The conscious effort by anthropologists to produce very tentative conceptions demonstrates their disciplinary awareness of the concept’s vast complexity; however this hesitancy is not particularly useful for transnational business, which relies on finite, succinct, quantitative data that can be replicated and expanded, as demonstrated by Hofstede and Triandis’s theoretical foundations. Despite an overall reluctance to produce concrete conceptions of culture, what was deduced through patterns of content analysis, was the idea of meaning making, which suggests that groups internalize certain ideas about culture based on group dynamics, and “integrate” these meanings and “ideals” in everyday life without questioning their origins.

The anthropological perspective on culture and anthropology’s role is crucial to understanding how fits in an applied sense, namely that of transnational business. This idea of internalization points to the concept of culture as a learned phenomenon, as opposed to an innate, purely cerebral conception of culture. However, many of the practitioners situate culture as “a set of rules for how to behave that we internalize and then never talk about---just don’t question it”--this conception is mirrors Levi-Strauss’s structuralism, the idea that we utilize certain structures of the mind that function unconsciously to maintain social organization. It is difficult to disassociate this particularly psychological conception of culture with Triandis and Hofstede’s conception of the concept. However the difference between these conceptions is that the level of analysis employed by Triandis and Hofstede is at the individual level and projected onto the group, while the anthropological understanding is group based..
C.1. THE ROLE OF ANTHROPOLOGY

The majority of the data collected from audio transcriptions revolves around the role of anthropology as a keyholder to cultural knowledge and cultural advocate. This is because methodological issues, namely because many of my interview questions were geared toward understanding the practitioner’s role in their own discipline. This is also partly due to the fact that the interviewees uniformly returned to the idea of anthropology as assuming certain disciplinary authority of the culture concept. These practitioners placed themselves at a distance from other social scientists, in their use of “time-depth”, in their ability to “link larger and smaller structures” of society, and through anthropology’s overall “unique contribution to the culture concept”. For example, one of the non-applied practitioners expressed the importance of anthropology as mechanism by which to holistically approach research:

While a wildlife biologist looks at people and sees a certain thing, they’re only seeing something that has to do with biology, they’re not thinking about kinship and social organization and systems or other kinds of factors that play in to a certain thing”. An applied practitioner suggested, this emphasis on holism “informs a wider base of knowledge what influences what happens on the ground

There was an overall consensus that anthropologists possessed the unique skills to operationalize culture like no other discipline and therefore held the key to invaluable knowledge that others could not access. One of the applied practioners adapted the idea of transnational business to facilitate an example of this uniquely anthropological theoretical skill:

Anthropology tries to understand humanity in its whole, the past the biology, the culture, the linguists; which can be incredibly helpful: if you say the cultural differences in business transactions, that’s a standard one we always use in anthropology, and it’s a good one, because there are going to be a lot of differences in the way people are going to approach solving problems in the business world, for example, differences in whether you work together as a group or whether you work as an individual who contributes to a group or how that all goes—sometimes anthropologists can be really helpful in clarifying what’s going
on, especially when there is miscommunication. So when you’re talking about Chinese executives and American executives coming together, there are probably going to be cultural differences—an anthropologist can be very helpful in understanding where those differences are coming from and how to deal with some of those, and in some of the earliest applied work, you hear a lot about that.

This quotation is fascinating because it demonstrates not only certain self-perceptions about disciplinary skill sets; it illustrates certain assumptions by anthropologists themselves regarding the role of culture in transnational business. First and foremost we see a repetition of anthropology as a holistic science, attempting to understand the whole of human experience. The data suggests that these practitioners favor this conception of culture, and don’t find it to be a limiting factor in its applicability to other disciplines. They view their holism as strength, providing them the unique skill to see beyond the scope of observation and interpret based on heavy contextualization of material. In attributing this strength to an applied setting such as ‘business transactions’, the data shows a link between transnational business conceptions of culture and the assumptions of anthropologists themselves regarding the role of culture in facilitating transactions.

First and foremost, the practitioner refers first to the idea of difference in situating culture within transnational business. This parallels the method used by transnational business, and by situating culture as synonymous with difference, the practitioner recognizes the limited nature of culture within transnational business, determining that anthropology’s role would be to expand this scope of reference in order to improve upon its role within transnational business. The practitioner refers to the idea of “groups” versus “individual” grouping, which parallels Hofstede and Triandis’s emphasis on individualism versus collectivism. Additionally, culture is conceptualized at a national level, once again paralleling conceptions of culture with theoretical foundations of transnational business. Finally, the quote suggests that anthropology would serve
as a mechanism by which to make difference easier to “deal” with. This once again positions culture as an obstacle that must be reduced in order to proceed with transnational business transactions.

The data suggests that these anthropologists position themselves as keyholders to cultural knowledge and are therefore qualified to advise other disciplines on how to situate difference. For example, one applied practitioner noted:

This stuff is useful, we can take this stuff to business schools and businesses—help them solve problems in the real world where very often people are not equipped to handle profound differences—at least at the theoretical level, anthropology provides a theoretical repertoire to figure out the right questions to ask and reasonable answers that can put us in better stead.

This quote, offered by one of the non-applied practitioners, suggests that anthropologists view themselves as experts on difference but only at a theoretical level, perhaps within the realm of academia but not in application. The data suggests an emphasis on anthropological self-identification with the superiority of the “anthropological lens” with its “unique approach to the culture concept”. When asked about possible shortcomings of the discipline or possibilities for why it has been utilized less in an applied state than other social sciences, almost all the practitioners drew on methodological and theoretical ambiguity. Methodologically speaking, the data suggests that practitioners were both defending their claim to long, qualitative inquiry (“you can infer only by watching people”), and, acknowledging the short comings of such time-consuming inquiry in an applied setting. Several described “methodological differences” in working outside the field, especially in the creation of survey measurements. The most voiced shortcoming of the discipline was its tendency to limit its application to a critical discipline of anthropology. While anthropology was commended for having a scientifically critical eye, the
data suggests that many of the practitioners disliked the lack of practicality associated with this purely critical contribution to outside disciplines.

So there’s a lot of anthropology nowadays that’s really critical anthropology, and that to me, that goes nowhere, you’re only talking to yourself because you’re just looking at your bellybutton going ‘those people over there do it wrong!’ but no one else cares. There’s no tangible nothing, you’re not speaking a language that those people you’re criticizing will understand.

This idea addresses a fundamentally theoretical dilemma with anthropology, a discipline that is less application-based than its colonial origins would suggest. One of the applied practitioners addressed the need for change within the discipline, from purely critical to constructively critical:” As anthropologists, we really start out wanting to save the world, we really get upset when we see inequalities or injustice. And so the trouble is, it’s really easy to sit in a corner and yell and scream and cry and criticize everything left and right, but of course, eventually nobody listens to you anymore”. Additionally several of the practitioners emphasized the importance of making anthropology more collaborative, more methodologically open to other disciplines, and therefore more useful in an applied setting.

Anthropologists think too much. If you go into the business world for example, and an anthropologist is going in with a whole holistic, big picture thing, that may cost more money than the organization has available, it may take more time that what the organization has available, again you have to really make sure the goals matchup between the anthropologist and the organization they have to work with because sometimes those bigger picture things are great in one context but not so great in other instances, however just with anything else, I think there’s ways to— as long as communication is good, than you can talk about it

As a result of its constantly critical character, many of the practitioners felt “marginalized” and only indirectly relevant in regard to the culture concept.
CONCLUSION

This study illustrates the complex and convoluted conceptions of culture within international business. Culture, from the perspective of the discipline of anthropology, has gone from a sophisticated analytical instrument that attempted to take seriously human behavioral diversity, to a reduced symbol of antinomies of difference presumed to operate universally. Difference, in other words, has been collapsed into mere structure of opposition and sameness, and the use of “culture” as an instrument of understanding and respecting difference has been reduced to a mirror that reflects this opposition and creates mechanisms by which difference can be assimilated in order to provide for efficient and effective commercial transactions across national and cultural boundaries. The systematic manner by which it is organized allows international business to simplify the complexities of culture into a set of distinguishable steps and “do’s and don’t’s”, another mechanism for making culture less ambiguous, and ultimately, most efficient for the facilitation of transnational corporate interaction. Culture is devised within sociological and psychological theoretical frameworks, disassociated with anthropology, its discipline of origin.

Following Hofstede and Triandis’s conceptions of national culture, international business employs the individual as its primary measure of analysis, and yet attributes its understandings of individual mental processes as relating to behavioral and value-driven patterns of national culture and transnational corporate interaction. Linking sociological theory, culture is classified within a hierarchical economic and social institutional framework, contributing to the contradictory presentation of culture as a simple, finite set of mechanisms, to a culture as an enormous set of social systems. Conceptions of culture within anthropology are admittedly complex and at times, unclear. However, anthropology is conscious of this disciplinary limitation, which is very useful...
in that it does not erroneously presume there to be a finite conception of a concept as complex as culture. Additionally, anthropological analysis of group interactions would better match international business expectations of cultural difference overseas, and perhaps limit blunders in transnational corporate interactions. Sociological and psychological understandings of culture are limited in their focus on two ends of the social spectrum: the individual and society. While both contribute somewhat to a more straightforward understanding of culture in transnational corporate interaction, they can be greatly enhanced by the intricacies of anthropological knowledge and skill in determining nuisances of cultural difference. As for anthropology itself, the discipline must be more open to embracing theory and methodology of other disciplines, and be willing to adapt to a more inter-disciplinary collaboration.
References


APPENDIX 1.1

*Standard Questions for Applied Anthropologists*

How did you decide to go into your current field? Did your training in anthropology facilitate this decision? If so, or if not, to what extent did anthropology have an impact?

How were you received by colleagues in your current field? Have you noticed changes in the way anthropologists are viewed when they first enter into the field?

Did you ever have to explain your position as an anthropologist? To whom did you need to explain your status to? How did you go about doing that?

Can you cite any instances in which it was apparent to you that your training as an anthropologist was a drawback? An asset?

What are your thoughts on how the concept of culture? As a key element of anthropology, how is culture perceived within a corporate sphere? Do you feel you use conceptualizations of culture in your work that are in line with anthropology? If so, how? If not, why are there differences? Are these differences problematic?

What methodologies do you employ to conduct your research/work? How has anthropology influenced these methodologies? How useful are these methods?

Have you come across any differences in how you as a trained anthropologist understand the problems related to [insert specifics regarding participant’s expertise] that you see and how your colleagues of other disciplines see them?

Were there any instances in which your research conclusions were contested by your colleagues outside the field of anthropology? When and why did they contest?
APPENDIX 1.2

Standard Questions for Interview Questions for Non-Applied Anthropologists

How has anthropology developed as an applied social science?

How have the historical foundations of anthropology affected its current status as a discipline?

How do you think anthropology has been historically viewed outside the discipline? Has this conception changed?

In your experience, what are the strengths of anthropological study? What are the drawbacks? How relevant is it outside the discipline?

How do issues of difference shape understanding on a fundamental level? How do you believe these issues are dealt with within the discipline? How are they dealt with outside of the discipline?

How does anthropology conceptualize culture? Why is culture such a contested concept?

What could have the role of culture and the role of the anthropologist more salient outside the discipline?

How do you feel culture is conceived outside the discipline? How similar or different is this conception to those employed in anthropology?
APPENDIX 1.3.

List of Codes found in Transnational Business Guidebooks, Corporate Policy Manuals and Audio Transcriptions through the process of content analysis.

Cultural differences
Frustrate
Confusing
Unpredictable
Reduce confusion
Predictability
Classifying customs practices
Logical patterns
Human brain is programmed in terms of patterns
Cultural variables
Logical system
Problems from simple categorization of cultural variables
Patterns approach makes sense
Writings of anthropologists
Scholars of intercultural communication
Geertz
Edward T
Mildred Reed Hall
Hofstede
Moran
Gudykunst
Culture shocks
Cultural adjustments
Severity of shock
Cultural distance
Repeated shocks and adjustments tend to make us sensitive to cultural differences which divide culture
Make us aware of SIMILARITERS THAT BIND
US
Seller adapts to buyer
Cultural differences only important if you want to negotiate the best deal
Visitor is expected to observe local custom
Don’t mimic or copy local behavior
Be yourself
local sensitivities
honoring local customs habits
traditions
deal-focused vs relationship focused
task-oriented people oriented informal vs formal high status people of hierarchical cultures status consciousness of formal people may offend egalitarian sensibilities of informal folk rigid vs fluid time cultures worships the clock emotionally-expressive emotionally-reserved communicate differently verbally paraverballly nonverbally cultural value-uncomfortable doing business with strangers Different languages and cultures Language and culture interwoven National culture Communication styles National borders not necessarily cultural border Aims not to provide recipe on how to appease corporate cultures but improve communication Edward T. Hall Culture not definite entity Concept in brain Reptilian brain Early mammalian system Neocortex Formal/hierarchical Informal/intuitive Technical/intellectual High-context Low-context cultures List of do’s and don’ts Culturemes: knowledge of extremes in culture learned in some crash course on international business and management Culturally based differences Affect attitudes Behaviors Contexts Prepare for future business negotiations Scharf, Mathuna--Cultural context: ex of including politics In order to point out and discuss differences btm irish cultures, which are close together but politically apart Present economic situation in both parts of island and make predictions about future High context: support, understanding, friendship, trust Low context: risk, fairness, long-term relationship, rule Cultural values Expectations Conventions Some behaviors not learned, hardwired brains get info from emotions to guide behavior each brain has its own reality own intelligence own memory own sense of space and time publicly agreed upon (movement from ind brain to collective brains) group, or culturally informal, formal, technical levels of culture culture rooted in something real behavior: conditioned, acquired, learned inventories of responses Concepts of culture Social context International and cultural aspects of social world Lives revolve around group functions Ethnocultural identification Group people Endorse patterns of behavior associated with lifestyle/worldview

89
Cultural groups
Concept of culture
Anthropology and
organizational behavior
Construct of culture
Geertz
Leung and bond
Earley and Singh
Martin
Nature of culture as entity
Complex collage or understood
using fundamental dimensions
Is culture real/existing outside
the minds of observers
Shared meaning system
Mental programming
Hofstede
Evaluating situational events
“Successful implementation of
motivational techniques and
managerial practices depend on
their congruences with cultural
context”
Adjust to changes
Role of cognitive mechanisms
of information processing
How employees interpret and
evaluate situation and processes
affect behavior
Multinational
Multicultural
Cultural influences on work
activities
Culture as exogenous factors
that influence management
process
Cultural variables are left
implied, not stated
(Reductionist)
Bridge gap between
culture/country
Comfort staying in one’s culture
Not having to CONFRONT new
assumptions
Creatures of our own social
creation
Cross-cultural psychology
Inability to rule out alternative
explanations of differences
obtained in c-c studies
“The dilemma is an inherent
problem with cross-cultural
research because ‘culture’ is
typically confounded with other
attributes of a society such as
various institutions, economic
systems, or it remains entirely
unspecified or implicit in the
model”
Hofstede: “culture was best
dealt with at a national level,
and so aggregation was the only
solution. By not doing so, he
argued, a researcher would
commit the “ecological fallacy”
created by inappropriate
comparisons across levels”
national culture
economic prosperity
economic growth
predictive of both national
economic wealth and economic
rates of growth
identify generic type
characteristics of a nation or
ethnic group
nation is focus (unit of analysis)
not individual
individual is component of unit
of analysis
conflict
difference
values
cognitively focus on others
workplace culture
individual personality (apart
from, relationship with C)
culture(S)
cultural dimensions
4 dimensions of culture
pas economic growth (apart
from, relationship with C)
cultural measures
cultural variables
Chinese Value Survey
confusion values
eastern vs. western culture
national value
national measure
political/civil freedoms
communist vs noncommunist
political systems
industrial democracy
achievement motivation vs
control motivation
MNEs operating in a variety of
cultures
growth is national goal
strong correlation that culture
matters for econ performance
military
economic
financial actions
cultural variables
"Protestant Work Ethic"
"Entrepreneurial spirit"
capital formation
technological progress
savings
governmental policy
provide context
plausible mechanism for
economic growth
national culture dimensions
culture's consequences
how C influences people's
affairs
cultural values
education
population growth
nutrition
capital investment
technological innovation
national cultural characteristics
corporate culture
culture is worthy of
consideration
culturally based--political
freedom
make the most of national
culture
cultural traits durable across
levels of aggregation
goal of economic growth
inventiveness
helps adaption
knowledge to function
effectively in social environment
reflected in products of mind
language
myth
art
kinship
norms
values
shared meanings about
interpersonal behaviors
some culture is objective (tools)
some culture is subjective
(beliefs, attitudes)
shared patterns of elements of
subjective culture (cultural
syndromes)
shared pattern of beliefs,
attitudes, self-definition, norms,
roles, values (cultural syndrome)
beliefs
attitudes
self-definition
norms
roles
values
test values: ask people who speak particular language to make judgment, if they respond within 2 seconds, the judgment is widely shared, and thus an element of culture
cultural differences; best conceptualized as different patterns of sampling information found in the environment
Asian and Latin American cultures more likely give priority to goals of ingroup in-group norms share behavior and personal attributes to shape behaviors than personal attitudes social relationships as communal collectivist cultures have languages without use I and U individualists--positive about language collectivists-ambivalent about 'me' in language American European good-bad strong-weak fast-slow individual, group, self east asian kenyans india cook islands new zealand social content cultures-simple/complex hunter-gatherer (complexity) cultural uniformity/conformity cultural complexity simple cultures lots of rules, norms, and ideas about correct behavior some cultures have fewer rules, norms in the former cultures (tight), people become quite upset when others don't follow the norms of society, and may even kill those who do not behave as expected latter cultures people are tolerant of deviations from normative behaviors conformity is high in tight cultures loose culture when cultures are at the intersections of "GREAT CULTURES" (thai btwn china/india) contradictory norms found strict in imposing cultures theocracies or monasteries tight and poor hunter-gatherer (complexity) Australians influenced by others more vertical cultures-accept hierarchy as given VC: hierarchy is national state VC: at TOP have more power/privileges than those at bottom, people are inherently different horizontal cultures: accept equality as given; people are similar, equal division of resources active cultures-change environment to fit them passive cultures-people change themselves to fit environment action oriented competitive self-fulfillment cooperative emphasize experience of living concerned with getting along with others treatment by basic universal criteria (universalism) treat others on basis of who the other person is (particularism) diffuse: respond to environment in holistic manner specific culture: discriminate different aspects of stimulus complex ascription: ascribed attributes (race, sex, family membership) attributes people are born with achieved attributes: acquired instrumental: get the job done expressive: enjoy the social relationship social relationship eclipses imp of instrumental relationship Latin Americans emotionally expressive: express emotions freely, no matter the consequences emotional suppression: control expression of emotion Mediterranean east asian value orientations culture of honor attributes of culture cultures differ in the way people sample information automatic behaviors standard operating procedures and unstated assumptions about the way the world is driving to the right is automatic members of cultures believe their thinking is correct, need not be discussed Iraqis when Iraqis accept decisions of their dictator without debate, they reveal their vertical society People are different Americans who work at UN aren't like Americans making decisions in Washington "obvious" that whoever is in power (in Iraq) has the unchallenged right to make decisions basic assumptions are not questioned assumptions influence thinking, emotion, actions without people noticing we can not detect our own biases culture influences people behavior reflects behavioral intentions and bits habits are automatic when behavior has not occurred in the past, so that it did not have a chance to become automatic (automaticity requires many, sometimes hundreds of repetitions), then info must be processed behavioral intentions to do something are usually when
behavior is associated with positive emotion
less likely to do something when associated with negative emotion
affect
norms
self-concept
perceived consequences
cultures weigh variables differently
perceived control a variable
self-efficacy
culture associated with behavior indirectly
c influences culture weight of variables that predict behavior rather than be influencing behavior directly
facilitating conditions
predicting behavior
cultural syndromes above refer to phenomena at cultural level
levels of analysis: cultural, individual
cultural level vs individual level different
more affluent and individualistic the culture, the more satisfied they are with their work
idiocentric (personality equivalent of individualism)
allocentric (behave like collectivists do)
homogenous cultures
collectivism relative based on role, age
culture is low/high based on "average" it is likely to be high or low
mechanical solidarity
(durkeheimian collectivism)
organic solidarity
(individualism)
gemeinschaft (community) vs. gesellschaft (society) in sociology
relational or individualistic value orientation in anthropology
tendencies toward individualism vs collectivism
polythetic constructs: individualism/collectivism
defining attributes tell us that we are dealing with
self-definition
interdependent
shared resources
autonomous
structure of goals: for self or in-group
emphasis on norms vs attitudes
relatedness vs rationality
individual a combo of hori, verti, ind, coll
individuals have access to all four kind of cognition
sample cognition depending on the situation
individualist cognitions
harmony
cooperation
inequality creates stress, envy, resentment
multicultural
individualism in affluent societies
intersections of major cultures
several normative systems to choose from
upper classes
professionals
social class
indonesia
relatively homogenous population density and job interdependence
religious
importance of age
self-direction
security
tradition
conformity values
hedonism
stimulation
age increases collectivism
cognitions are like TOOLS
tool selected to shape person's behaviors
context
situation "calls forth" one of four patterns we have discussed clear or ambiguous situations of appropriateness of patterns
modal patterns
strong-situation disposition
reaction
cultural pattern
automatic behaviors carried out without thinking
cultural affordances; automatic behaviors that individual
behavior/shape cult
person changes culture
culture changes person
factors inc probability that cog system will be activated
motivation
social exchanges
bases of exchanges: equity (to each according to contribution), equality, need (to each according to need)
rewards
behavior settings: earn membership into group vs membership by right
COL recreation group: stable membership, large, meets frequently
IND recreation group: variable membership, small, meets infrequently
communication
morality: contextual for culture matching organizational and national culture
effects of culture
term culture used liberally
culture different from state, society broader than national culture institutions
institutions include culture Cognitive and cultural explanations
institutions: cognitive normative and regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behavior
institutions include laws, regulations, norms, cultures institutions broader construct than culture
culture at industry or organizational level
country and regional cultures (and differences)
motivation to form alliance impacted by country/regional culture
country differences impact perceived incentives of learning from alliances lead to variations in resources and capabilities of firms located in these countries
country and regional differences increase the incentive and motivation to form alliances and benefit from knowledge transfer through them. Cultural differences hinder development of trust and increase costs of communication essential for transfer of more tacit forms of knowledge. Cultural differences inhibit efficacy and limits informal mechanisms of knowledge transfer. Decrease utility of alliances by restricting actual learning. Values reflect individual beliefs. Values serve as a useful function by providing individuals with guidelines or standards for determining their own behavior and evaluating behavior of others. Meaning of work project includes work centrality, work goals, societal norms about working. Work centrality: relative importance of work for employees. Work goals: values goals sought and preferred. Societal norms about working: compares beliefs about work as an entitlement or obligation.