

PRESS RELEASE

NEW BOOK INFORMATION

PAST AND FUTURE CULTURE

Social Sciences, Essay
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This unconventional book takes the reader on a journey to explore the gradual internationalization of past cultures as they become the societies of the present. Eight thematic chapters investigate cultural and post-cultural manifestations of human diversity, offering to non-specialists an introduction to values, authority, transnational communication, social capital, and global civic concerns. Each chapter concludes with a focus on one contemporary civilization.

Drawing from more than a thousand publications – social science classics, philosophy, literature, political science, business history, psychology, economic history, linguistics and anthropology – the author takes a unique and 360° perspective on the vital importance of cultural and multi-disciplinary awareness for all international undertakings.

This engaging essay is a practical and thought-provoking book, filling a gap in the educational curriculum of specialized career programs crowded with disciplinary objectives and occupational focus. The intentionally broad topic span makes a wide range of important humanistic and social science concepts relevant to careers in business, science, engineering and medicine.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY



**Anne E. Witte is Professor of Culture and
International Communication at EDHEC
Business School, France**

Author of more than twenty publications, Anne E. Witte, combines expertise in a range of the humanities and social sciences to provide interdisciplinary instruction to management students at EDHEC Business School (FRANCE) where she has held a position as Professor since 1991. Her research and writing address questions in cross cultural psychology, cultural history, literature, anthropology, international communication and critical thinking. With strong interests in developing interdisciplinary approaches to business education, she has been instrumental in the development of international programmes, multi-media learning platforms and novel educational tools. She holds two

doctoral degrees (one earned in the U.S., the other in France), and serves as Assistant Dean for offshore projects involving exchanges between business schools in New York, Beijing, and Nagoya and EDHEC *Grande Ecole*, FRANCE. A native New Yorker, she has lived in France for over 15 years, is multi-lingual and has extensive international teaching and field work experience.

QUESTIONS THIS BOOK ADDRESSES

Why does culture have little to do with “nations?”

Why is the study of language and linguistics so quintessential to understanding unique cultural dispositions?

What lessons from ancient and medieval history help us to understand the cultural changes taking place in our globalizing world?

How do systems of governance reflect values that are shaped over decades? What happens when social values and government policies are no longer compatible?

How does society deal with its need to have authority yet also guarantee freedom, creativity and the mobility of its citizens?

Why do Wikipedia, youtube.com, and SMS technology radically alter previous norms of communication?

Will future generations speak Chinese? English? Both? Will the people in the world, under the influence of global media and technology, speak the same language and live in similar material worlds?

WHAT MAKES THIS BOOK DIFFERENT?

The term “post-cultural” is a leitmotif in the book describing the contemporary period when territory, region, nation, religion and language – the traditional measures of culture – no longer encapsulate the cultural “essences” of multi-cultural people influenced by history, diversity and global consciousness.

The essay format is an innovative teaching and inspirational method because it combines perspectives culled from disciplines rarely considered together: political science, area studies, linguistics, cross cultural psychology, biology, science and anthropology. It is ground-breaking in the multi-disciplinary perspective sustained throughout the book.

The content has been tailored for the non-specialist in order to draw attention to a wide variety of humanities and social science concepts that are vital to working with human diversity in a changing global environment. Particularly thought-provoking in a period of financial downturn, economic recession, environmental crisis and religious conflict, the essay positions a number of contemporary themes within historical perspective.

The author’s bicultural experiences and thorough familiarity with France introduce into this English-language manual different and novel perspectives and examples.

Two opposing rationalizations about culture are pursued in this book. The first is that culture exists and is an historical and normative reality of human societies that can be described, transmitted, criticized and apprehended by members and outsiders. It is a repository of myths, events, objects, practices and values that serve as sediment for local identity and the projection of that identity to neighbours. This portrayal of culture can easily be undermined by a second perspective – one that sees culture as an inherently political, imaginative and temporary device, more a matter of planned

representation than of spontaneous, ethnic reality. This culture is actually a syncretic by-product, a conflation of traditions and philosophies combined in such a chaotic way that any attempt to re-construct a stable social history meets failure.

WHY THIS BOOK?

With over 20 years experience teaching in higher education and interaction with students and adults worldwide specializing in science, business, humanities and technological program, the author assembled the book data from courses offered as “electives” in the management program of a French *Grande Ecole*. The spontaneous questions about culture and eagerness for cultural subjects amongst French and international business students inspired greater efforts in creating teaching materials and reading guides. With positive student feedback, high participant enthusiasm, and assessment results indicating a good match between teaching style, content proposal and learning outcomes, the author wrote this portable cultural manual so that students could keep it for future reference. In addition to the essays and focus sections, the book contains twenty graphs, charts and tables serving as memory and thought device for classroom and advanced writing purposes.

WHO NEEDS THIS BOOK?

The number of multinational teams working in global organizations today (scientists, doctors, athletes, students, computer analysts, poets, illegal aliens and trombone players) combined with international educational standards, increased tourism, and heightened awareness of diversity has made cultural learning and training applicable to everyone. Nation specific knowledge for nation specific psychologies no longer encapsulates the gamut of needs in a society where migration and transnational operations allow national and multinational organizations to draw on an international pool of people, talent and resources to produce products and service for global and local audiences.

Many professionals have far too little background in the complexity of cultural environments and the changing face of human geography and the majority does not have the time to take in-depth courses about all the world’s cultures. The traditional university approach to resolving this problem has been to offer area studies courses aiming to make students regional “specialists.” Expatriate training may be offered to fill gaps in cultural knowledge relying on “do’s and don’ts” short courses. But cataloguing and comparing cultures promotes forms of essentialism that can be counterproductive in a multicultural and globalizing work environment. This book examines how that traditional approach to culture is changing with less focus on national differences and more on the complex and interdependent factors that determine personal, social, institutional and civic values across the world today. This search for integrated, cross-disciplinary paradigms is a quest not only to sustain business models, but also to enhance human prosperity and link geographically distant people and conceptually diverse ideas into sustainable eco-systems.

OTHER INFORMATION AVAILABLE IN DECEMBER 2009

A small PDF of the front cover

Amazon.com author page (with sample pages and reviews)

Amazon.fr coming soon