In 1980 Geert Hofstede published his landmark study, *Culture’s Consequences: International Differences in Work Related Values*. The book described what has been the largest survey of work values, encompassing 88,000 employees in 72 countries. An updated version expanded the survey to an additional ten countries and three regions (Hofstede, 2001). Arguably more important than the scale of the study was the framework it introduced. Based on the survey data, Hofstede put forth a new and parsimonious conceptualization of culture, accompanied by measurements and indexes. He proposed that culture is the “collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another” (1980, p. 13), and more specifically identified five universal values occurring to varying degrees in each country: individualism, masculinity, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation. The framework translated the rather amorphous idea of culture into a tractable construct amenable to empirical research. Subsequently, the framework has been widely applied in various business disciplines, as well as spilling over into the social sciences.

Recent literature reviews point to Hofstede’s framework as the dominant culture paradigm in business studies. In reviewing the international business literature, Kirkman and colleagues note that the work is more widely cited in the Social Sciences Citation Index than competing theories of culture, “inspiring thousands of empirical studies” (2006, p. 285). In an analysis of cross-cultural management studies Taras and Steele observe that the book is a “super classic,” and conclude that nearly all cross-cultural studies have been influenced by its approach to culture (see their chapter in this book). Sivakumar and Nakata (2001) likewise comment that the paradigm has grown in impact, superseding other culture theories and catapulting Hofstede into the ranks of the top three
referenced international business authors. And Nakata and Izberk-Bilgin (also in this volume) determine that marketing researchers have incorporated Hofstede’s framework into their work with far greater frequency than any other culture concept.

What explains this popularity? There are several reasons. Hofstede’s work first of all rests on a mammoth survey of thousands of respondents in a diverse array of countries and regions. The data collected was sufficient to derive statistically based insights into culture that had not been possible before. It would be difficult to replicate or improve upon this study even today, though the recent GLOBE project attempts to do so (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, and Gupta, 2004). Another reason is that the set of values—initially four, with a fifth added later—is collectively capable of describing all, not just a subset of, national cultures. So for researchers interested in explaining or describing any single culture or cluster of cultures, the framework is pliable for a range of needs. A third reason is that the dimensions have theoretical moorings. While the charge has been leveled that the framework is overly reductionist, a reading of Hofstede’s work reveals some grounding in prior theoretical work done in anthropology, sociology, and psychology. The factor of individualism is a case in point. Hofstede anchors this dimension in conceptualizations offered by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), Parsons (1937), and others. Finally, Hofstede’s provision of a survey questionnaire and operationalization of culture into standardized scores facilitates application in quantitative research. Rival frameworks, even when more nuanced, such as Hall’s high–low context concept, have not gained widespread acceptance in part because of the lack of instruments (see Adair, Buchan, and Chen in this book for a discussion of this issue).

**Conditions ripe to look beyond**

Nonetheless conditions have emerged indicating that the time is ripe to look beyond Hofstede. There is a need for new understandings of culture, especially in the fields of global marketing and management, the domains most concerned with the implications of culture for business. One indicative condition is the increasingly fluid nature of culture. In this age of globalization, cultures are traversing national borders, co-mingling, hybridizing, morphing, and clashing through media, migration, telecommunications, international trade, information technology, supranational organizations, and unfortunately terrorism. With interdependencies created through globalization, such as interlocking financial and banking systems, people—the carriers and possessors of culture—are interacting, confronting, and exchanging their diverse ways