A WIDE-RANGING consensus among scholars and practitioners is that large-scale Japanese corporations have developed organizational structures, policies and processes which are not common in other countries. This consensus is reflected in two types of reports. The first type focuses on various aspects of Japanese work and management (Abegglen 1958 & 1970; Takezawa 1966; Adams and Kobayashi, 1969; Bairy 1968 & 1969; Ballon 1970; Nakane 1970; Van Zandt 1970; Hanami 1973; Kawada 1973; Okamoto 1973; Dickerman 1974; Johnson and Ouchi 1974; Rohlen 1974 & 1975; Noda 1970 & 1975). The second type concerns comparative management; these include data on Japanese enterprises (Whitehill and Takezawa 1968; England and Lee 1971; Dore 1973; and Haire, et. al., 1966). ¹

Within this consensus, however, there are diverse views concerning the sources of the seemingly unique Japanese situation. One pole emphasizes socio-cultural factors – namely, unique social norms and unique employee attitudes (most forcefully in Abegglen 1958; Nakane 1970; and England and Lee 1971; and less so in Whitehill and Takezawa 1968). The other pole emphasizes what some call structural factors – namely, historical developments, characteristics of the labor market, and the initiative and rational decisions of leading individuals (Taira 1962 & 1970; Marsh and Mannari 1971, 1972 & 1973a & 1973b; Matsuoka 1972). In between, there are three positions: (1) neither the socio-cultural factors nor the structural factors by themselves, constitute sufficient explana-

¹ The latter found that cross-national differences were substantial but not overwhelming.
tions (Cole, esp. 1973); (2) certain aspects of the Japanese experience are embedded in Japanese culture, having strong elements of continuity from the pre-modern Tokugawa period, while other aspects stem from structural factors (Dore 1973; Drucker 1971 & 1975); and (3) Japanese organizational behavior can be best understood as an inextricable fusion of socio-cultural and structural factors (Rohlen 1974).

In this article we examine one aspect of the socio-cultural explanation: to what extent are attitudes of Japanese employees of large corporations shared by employees in other countries. Hopefully, the results of this examination will refine existing theories concerning the uniqueness of Japanese organizational sociology, and contribute to the literature on cross-national management.

We studied three organizations in Japan, each being a subsidiary of a different non-Japanese MNC, and compared them with three subsidiaries in three other countries, each belonging to a different foreign-based MNC. (This comparison was based on an attitude survey described below.) In addition, we compared the six subsidiaries with Japanese corporations. Our comparison related to attitudes towards four types of organizational behavior—leadership, decision making, communication and group behavior—among three categories of employees: Japanese employees in non-Japanese MNCs operating in Japan (Japanese host-country nationals), non-Japanese host-country nationals; and Japanese employees in Japanese corporations.

We expected to find that the attitudes of Japanese host-country nationals are one of the following: (a) similar to those of Japanese employees of Japanese corporations; (b) similar to those of non-Japanese host-country nationals; (c) similar to those of neither group; or (d) similar to those of both groups.

Previous studies concerned with the socio-cultural explanation followed one of two approaches: (1) a comparison of attitudes of Japanese in one type of organization and non-Japanese in another type of organization; and (2) a comparison of attitudes of Japanese and non-Japanese employees in one U.S.-based MNC's subsidiaries in several countries (Sirota and Greenwood 1971; Simonetti and Weitz 1972; and Hofstede 1972).

By including both approaches, we have two patterns of organizational structure, policies and processes (Japanese corporations vs. subsidiaries of MNC); two nationality categories (Japanese and non-Japanese); and three combinations of organizations and nationalities—namely, the three categories of employees.

Almost no systematic attitude surveys of Japanese host-country nationals have been published,² let alone cross-national surveys using the same instrument for comparing attitudes of Japanese and non-Japanese host-country nationals. The comprehensive study conducted in various subsidiaries of one U.S.-based MNC cited above (Sirota and Greenwood 1971) is a notable

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² One such survey was alluded to in Imai (1969).